

The Fringes of Fife



JOHN GEDDIE

ILLUSTRATED

BY

LOUIS WEIERTER



175

THE FRINGES OF FIFE

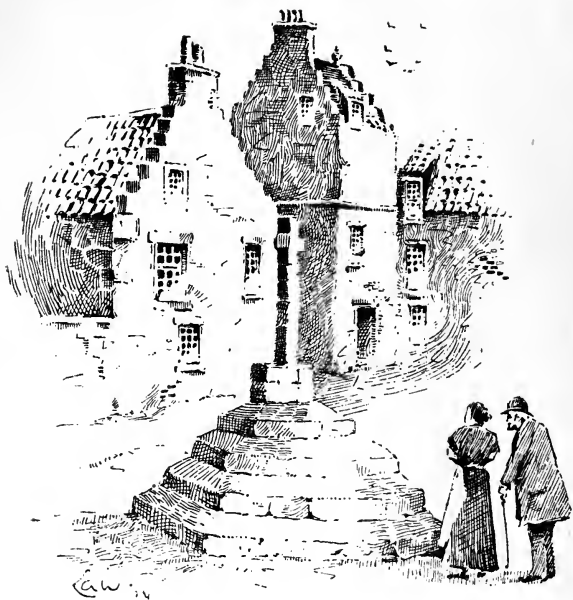
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The Study, Culross.

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The Fringes of Fife

By JOHN GEDDIE

ILLUSTRATED BY LOUIS WEIERTER

Fife is a Beggar's Mantle, with a Fringe of Gold

JAMES VI.

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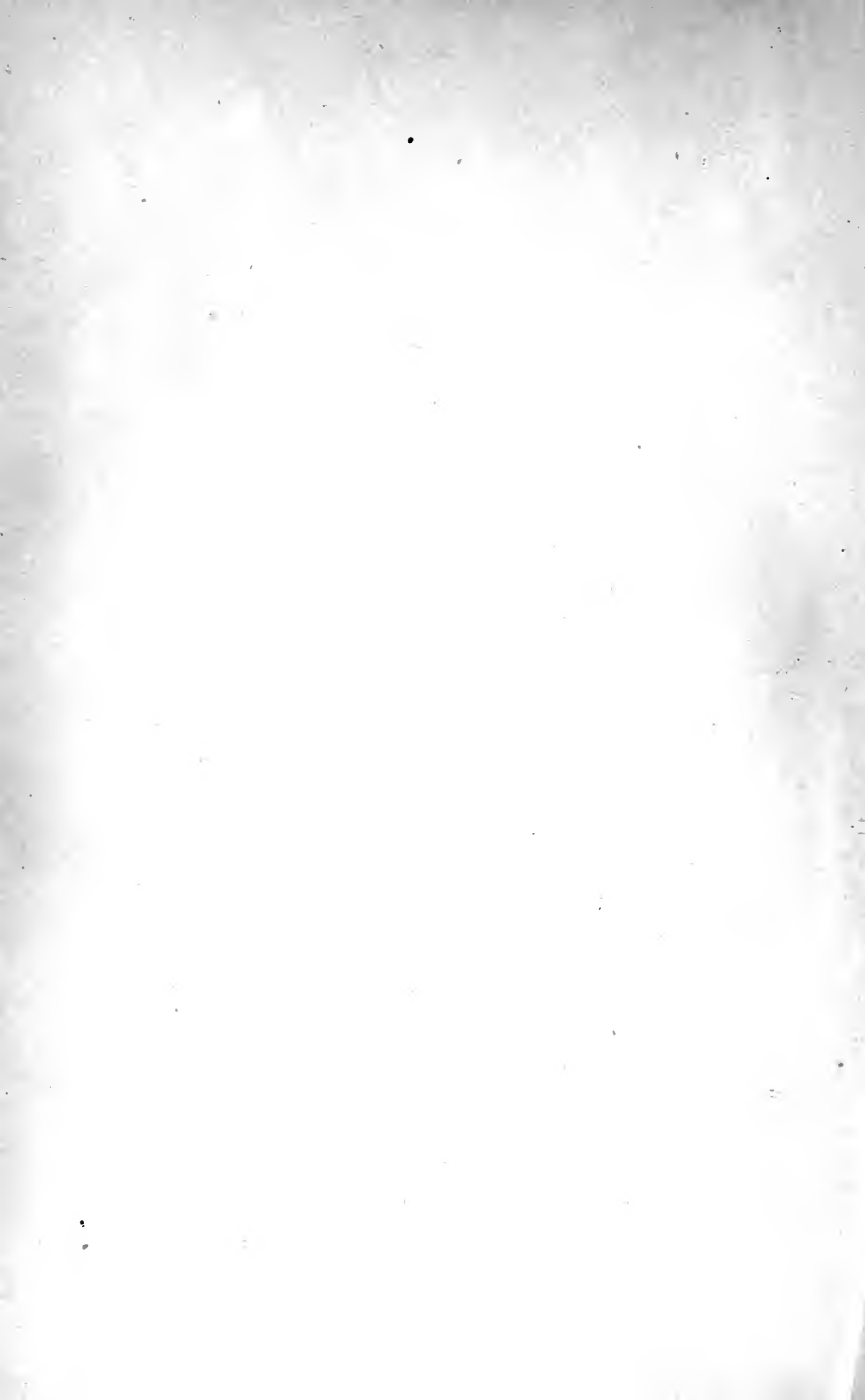
EDINBURGH: DAVID DOUGLAS

1894

STUDY ON THE

To
Charles A. Cooper
of the "Scotsman,"

For a quarter of a century
My kind Chief and Colleague.



FOREWORD

“I’ll to Fife.”—*Macbeth*.

THE days were of the shortest when we set out on our pilgrimage around the fringes of Fife. Our purpose was to seek and seize, as opportunity offered, the soul as well as the form of things Fifish. Such a quest is best made under gray skies, and in a nipping and an eager air. “Not in summer but in winter,” Mr. Andrew Lang tells us, “is the time to see St. Andrews”; and what is said of its chief shrine may be said of “the Kingdom” at large. When cold weather and easterly *haar* resume their reign there is a flitting of the migrants that settle for a season on the shores of Forth and Tay. The golfer no longer haunts so persistently putting-green and bunker. The camp-stool

of the artist is removed out of its place commanding some stretch of sand and sea, with the waves breaking white on rocky ledge or pierhead ; the nook of some little fishing haven where the boats are hauled up or lean aslant at half-tide, or the *howff* under the lee of the whitewashed gable wall where wide-breeched, weather-beaten gossips sun themselves. The last of the bathers and holiday-makers have fled with the leaves. Alien types are weeded out. Fife is itself again.

Only when the land has been thus purged and cleansed—after you have faced the wind from the North Sea that plies, through the winter and spring, its untiring rasp on the edges of the headlands and shrills round the seaward projections and callosities of the ancient buildings down by the shore—can you trust yourself to read aright the quaint hieroglyphic, of Nature's handiwork and man's, that is written along the margin of the Fife coast. The little burghs huddling under the shelter of cape and high ground ; the red-tiled, steep-ridged houses crowding together and turning their crow-stepped

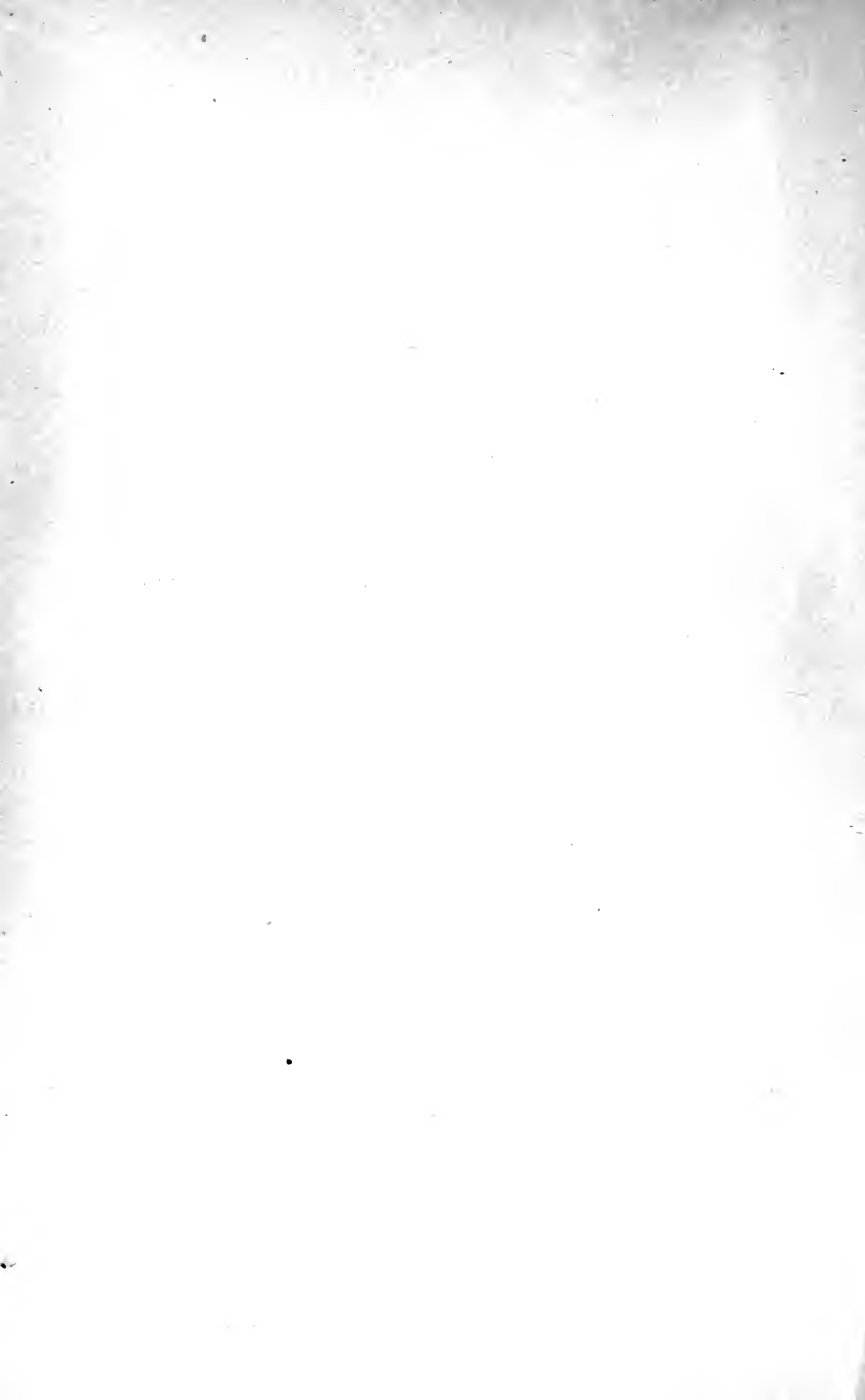
gables and forestairs to the street and their backs to the blast ; the forlorn little graveyards on the brink of the salt water, each with its group of old tombstones and storm-stressed trees gathered about some fragment of ivied ruin ; the Dutch-looking kirk spire and townhouse steeple sturdily asserting themselves beside the new schoolhouse and literary institute ; holy caves and wells, under a canopy of pit-smoke ; dilapidated salt-pan, and malt-barn, and doocot standing cheek-by-jowl with present-day villa and factory stalk—all are seen to be native to the element and to the scene. They have that indurated, strongly-marked individuality which belongs to Fife character as well as to Fife architecture. They are the expression of all the past weather and past history of the province. In the jargon of later science, they are reactions to the stimuli of their environment. Much of this the summer wayfarer misses.

Furthermore, it should be said that our survey of the hem of Fife was not carried out continuously. It was made by short descents, in scraps of leisure time. The

reader may amuse himself, if he likes, by marking changes in weather, season, mood, and companionship, and employ his ingenuity in picking out the seams in a loosely-woven narrative. He may detect, towards the end, a thrum or two of phrase and fact that have already made a fleeting appearance in *Round Fife with a Golf Cleek*. But he may rely on it that every step of the way was faithfully trodden. We clung to the coast line as closely as was consistent with the rights of private property. Never for long were we out of sight and sound of the sea. It may be said that this was but skimming Fife. The reply is that by such skimming one may gather the cream of the Kingdom. Its richest essence has condensed and become encrusted on its outer surface. The selvage, as King Jamie hinted, is worth the web. And this is said in full remembrance of Falkland and Dunfermline, of Cupar and Markinch, of Dura Den and Lindores Loch, of the slopes of the Ochils and the Lomonds.

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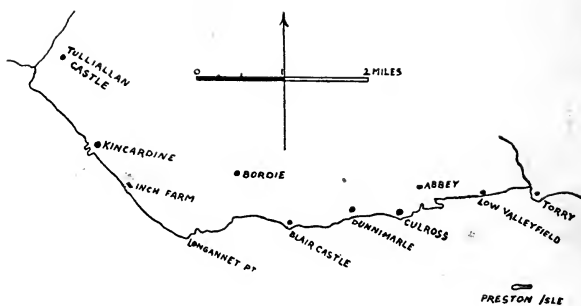


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KINCARDINE TO TORRYBURN



KINCARDINE TO TORRYBURN

Fuimus.—*Bruce Motto in Culross Church.*

THE river-boat drops us at the pier of Kincardine-on-Forth, and holds on its way with the breeze and tide. But still we linger at the landing-place. It is not a scene to part from hastily. The pathway of the broad river, straight and burnished and tapering like a sword blade, stretches away towards the heart of the Highlands. Stirling Castle and the Abbey Craig rise above the carselands where the Forth winds its links of gold, and overlook the battlefields of the War of Independence. Behind them, in dim outline, are Ben Lomond and his neighbours—friendly giants of Rob Roy's country that guard a land of enchantment. Nearer at hand are Dunmyat and Ben Cleuch and other crests of the pastoral Ochils, the purple shadows nestling in their folds and haze, or smoke from the chimneys of the hillfoot villages trailing across their skirts.

Beside us, the brimming waters lean against the embankments, as if eager to peer over into the green and hollow land reclaimed from the Firth.

Were it not better to rest here in lazy contemplation of the scene, like the coaling steamers anchored off Grangemouth, or to move upward with the merchant ships bound for Alloa, instead of pilgrimaging through Fife? Is it loss or gain to turn the back on soft Western skies and hills, on vapoury peaks melting into clouds, and set the face to the keen sharp air and hard and bare bounding lines of the North Sea?

Kincardine, when we have made our way into it, does not afford large compensation. Its streets come straggling up to the neighbourhood of the Cross, and stare vacantly at each other. They are wide and clean enough, and have some marks of eld, but they are wanting in distinction as well as in cheerfulness. The sap of life flows slowly through the old barony burgh. It has seen better days. The very houses are built upon the ashes of its former prosperity—upon the ejected refuse of its five-and-thirty salt-pans. Gone, too, is all but the name of the potent spirit of Kilbagie that inspired the mirth at Pousie Nancy's.

Many of the houses date from the latter part of last century. It was then that Kincardine stirred itself up to great things in the carrying

trade. A hundred years ago it would have as many as nine vessels on the stocks at one time. Its tonnage was more than half that of the port of Leith. It had vessels trading to the West Indies ; it sent whalers to the Greenland Seas ; a large share of the coasting traffic was in its hands. But these days are only a memory ; and an air of deadly dulness has settled down upon it. Yet the inhabitants have enough of spirit left to resent their recent inclusion by the Boundary Commissioners within the realm of Fife. "Me a Fifer !" said the young lady of the tobacconist's shop whom we had incautiously complimented on the change. "I'll never be a Fifer. I was born in Perthshire." This prejudice is not unknown among the neighbours of the Kingdom.

Behind the town is the handsome parish church of Tulliallan, crowned by an ornamental square tower. Further back and higher up, enclosed on three sides by the Tulliallan woods, is the dismantled older church, with its surrounding churchyard. It is unroofed, but the Dutch-looking spire, built in the Restoration period, still fronts toward the water. On the stones may be read many a sorrowful tale of the sea, of the time when Kincardine was peopled by ship-masters and mariners. The names are here, but the graves are scattered wide—"Died at Rio," "Drowned at Sea," "Buried at Moscow." Deeper

in the forest, also girt about by its little graveyard, are the fragments of the pre-Reformation church.

It would seem as if the population drew closer down to the shore as land was rescued from the river bed, and that the Church and the Dead had laggingly followed in the wake of the living. Old Tulliallan Castle, already a strong fortalice at the time of Edward I.'s invasion, had once stood on the margin of the Forth, as it now does almost on the western bounds of extended Fife. The moat, encompassing the strong gray walls screened by their little clump of wood, was filled from the river, now half a mile away across the level green fields. Its fine groined and vaulted hall, still in fair preservation, must have echoed in its time to much rude revelry. For its old masters, the Blackadders from the Merse, were a turbulent race, too ready with hand and tongue, and the good deeds of Robert Blackadder, Glasgow's first Archbishop, is hardly a set-off to the account of their acts of sacrilege and murder.

For a mile the "low road" to Culross does not begin to rise. The flat and fertile land, the high embankment damming back the river, the lines of poplars on the other shore bring memories of Holland. A deserted roperie trails its way down to the roadside from the green slopes on the left, and beside it is the embattled gable of a

ruined jail—industry and authority in decay. Near by is the Inch farm; and as we look through the porch a tug with a brig in tow comes sliding along the top of the embankment, as if drawn by an invisible string, and disappears in the direction of Longannet Point.

This apparition we follow eastwards, until the road begins to rise and twist round clumps of firwood and to skirt the parks of Sands. On the hill above there is a glimpse of the tower of Bordie, behind which, in the moorland, is the Standard Stone marking the scene of Sweno's defeat by the army of the "gentle Duncan." Along the shore is rough pasture and plantations with brushwood overgrowing the mounds of rubbish ejected from disused coal-pits and quarries. Wide was once the fame of the close-grained marble-like sandstone of Longannet and Blair. Old Drury Lane was built of it, and in the seventeenth century the Dutch are said to have sent hither for the stone used in the Town House of Amsterdam. Here and there the rock gleams through the wood in pretty bosky places, and great white ledges protrude from underneath the grass and trees upon the beach like giant ribs.

And now the high land pushes down to the coast. The slopes are covered with wood or terraced in gardens, and the road winds below. From behind the cliff appears, close down on the

shore, a group of roofs and a quaint steeple, and beyond it a noble sweep of bay.

This is Culross, a nook of Fife difficult to get at, and still harder to get away from. Railways do not come within two miles of it ; no passengers by water land at its little pier. The wooded ridge sweeps round it so steeply and closely that the trees and hanging gardens look directly down upon the Sandhaven and the West Green. It is like a protecting arm thrown around the forlorn old royal burgh. Here it has tucked itself away and gone to sleep—a sleep of centuries ; and the world has forgotten that in its day it set afoot great enterprises, showed how coal could be mined under the sea bottom, taught salt-making and the virtues of coal-tar gas, and sold its girdles throughout the Land of Cakes.

It is a corner into which Time has amused himself by raking together a choice collection of his curiosities in architecture and in character. We do not enter, however, immediately, or from this side. Crowning the hill above the little Episcopal Chapel of Saint Serf is a sheaf of towers. It is Dunimarle, and occupies, it is said, the spot where erst Macbeth swooped on the nest of the Thane of Fife and slew all his pretty chickens and their dam.

There is an invitation to climb up and look around on one of the fairest sea-scapes in Fife,

or in Scotland. We may even enter the Castle and examine the Museum of antiques and works of art, the library, and the collection of pictures left in trust under the will of the late Mrs. Erskine Sharpe. Everything is grandiose and monumental—the white terraces, the avenues of dark-plumed yew, the battlemented gateways, the great iron gates. Along a sombre approach of araucarias and wellingtonias we stroll, until we strike a delightful cross-road wandering away into woodland glades, and shortly come upon the sequestered nook where the remains of the Old Parish Church of Culross are hidden.

A little farther and we reach the road coming down from East Grange station, past Blairhall, the cradle of the Bruces, Earls of Elgin and Kincardine. The Gothic tracery on the gable wall of the “Chapel Barn”—now the West Lodge to the Abbey House—announces the neighbourhood of the venerable Abbey Church; and at the turn of the brae we come suddenly upon the massive Norman tower, the centre of the group of ancient trees and buildings that look down from their commanding site on the roofs and causeways of Culross and on the Firth beyond. Purists in architecture find fault with the Perpendicular battlements, as recent and out of keeping.



Coat of Arms,
Blairhall.

But the general effect is noble. The present Parish Church occupies the choir of the pre-Reformation structure.

It has echoed to much strong Calvinist doctrine since the monks were put to flight. For at Culross Fraser of Brea preached philippics against Prelacy and told of his strange religious "experiences" while a prisoner for conscience sake on the Bass; and here, too, Boston of Ettrick and the Erskines sowed the seed of the Secession.



Chapel Barn, Culross.

Standing on the churchyard grass one reads, on the gables of the adjacent aisle and vault, the legend "Man goeth to his long home," with the date 1642, and the name "Sir George Bruce of Carnok, Knight"—the younger of that title. His greater father, the father also of Culross's prosperity, rests within, under an alabaster tomb—now the chief mural ornament of the interior—adorned by figures of his children in the Van-

dyke costumes of the day. A Bruce that more attracts the romantic sympathy is young Edward,



Culross Abbey Church.

Lord Kinloss, who fell in 1613, in deadly duel fought with Edward Sackville, Earl of Dorset, in a flooded meadow at Bergen-op-Zoom. His

heart, in its silver casket, reposes in Culross Kirk.

Close behind the Church rise the stately front and pavilion roofs of the mansion of Culross Abbey, a fragment of the magnificent pile begun by the first Lord Kinloss, Master of the Rolls to King James, and designed, as is thought, by his kinsman the architect-baronet of Kinross. Within it, at a later date, Lord Dundonald, the famous projector, pursued his ingenious but ruinous experiments with coal-tar and naphtha ; while his yet more famous son, the hero of Basque Roads, ran wild about the place and risked his neck bird-nesting in the old pit-shafts. Changed times these since the White Friars patiently copied their illuminated missals, sat in the great Refectory Hall, paced the cloisters, of which a beautiful fragment still bounds the Manse garden, or toiled in the sunny orchard, running down the slope to the burgh confines ; or, in the intervals of work and prayer, watched the sails passing up and down the "Scots Water," and the citizens, girdle-smith and maltster-wife, douce burgess and trim damsel, moving through the maze of wynds between the Abbey and the Sandhaven.

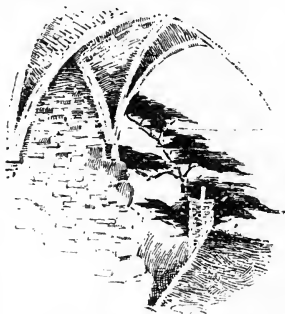
When you go back to the foundation of the Cistercian Abbey by Malcolm, Earl of Fife, in 1217, you are not half-way to the beginning of the civil and religious history of Culross. Was

not the good Saint Serf teaching his *Scolars* on this spot in 517, when Saint Thenew was drifted thither from Aberlady, and Saint Kentigern was born? The very spot is

known, for on it afterwards rose the little commemorative chapel, erected in 1503, by Archbishop Blackadder, the builder of the Blackadder Crypt in St. Mungo's Cathedral at Glasgow.

And if any one questions the later wonders wrought here by Mungo,

the Beloved, as his causing the hazel twig to burst into flame, and his restoring the dead bird to life, are they not emblazoned—the twig grown into a tree—on the arms of his favoured city of Glasgow, where also his mother, Thenew, has a local habitation and a name as Saint Enoch?



The Cloisters, Culross.

Strolling down the Tanyard Brae from the Abbey precincts, we arrest our steps in the open space beside the Cross. The little "place" is the centre of the burgh. Turn where you like there are groupings of ancient houses with initials, dates, devices, and mottoes carved on gable or door lintel, and vistas of steep and narrow "Cause-

ways." Within a few feet of the Cross we note two sixteenth-century dates on the old walls—1577 and 1591. Another quaint edifice, close by the cosy hostelry of the "Dundonald Arms," is the reputed residence of the "Saintly Leighton." But the most noticeable and well-preserved of the group is the building with the tall entrance tower, known as "The Study," which, with our backs to its venerable *vis-a-vis*, "The Ark," we pause to sketch. Its name and story are somewhat of a mystery. But it is a pleasing fancy that up that strait and winding stairway, in the curious little topmost chamber, with winnocks looking to the different airts of heaven, dwelt some forgotten scholar, who alternately pored over his books, watched the stars, and gazed down, as did the monks before him, on the gabble and stir of the little bourg.

Any of the "Cooross Causeys" will lead you to the Sandhaven and thence to the West Green. They are cleared spaces by the sea margin where the inhabitants come to gossip and bask in fine weather. Doubtless the burgh bailies know better, but the weather-beaten Tolbooth looks as if it had not only seen better days, but had long retired from business. Ranks of old houses stand here also, under the steep bank, some of them with tall dormer windows, boldly crowned with star or thistle finials. Most interesting and

most dilapidated of all are the two ancient buildings, with the dates 1597 and 1611, which Culrossians fondly call "the Palace" or "the Colonel Close." Here, in the early part of last century, lived the "Black Colonel" and the "Fair Colonel Erskine." They were cousins, and the former was that stern nonjuror and industrious litigant, John Erskine of Carnock, who uttered the dying lament: "I hae ten guid gangin' cases in the Court of Session, and that idiot, Jock, my son" (the author of the great Scots law classic, the *Institutes*), "will be settlin' them a' in a month."

Gaunt, solitary, and dropping to pieces with age and neglect, they seem, in their fallen estate, to be screening themselves from the vulgar gaze behind their courtyard walls. With no little trouble—for it was not the sight-seeing season—we persuade the sad-visaged custodier to give us entry.

"If I let in the like o' you, I nicht let in onybody," she says. We fleech and prevail, and are conducted through the darkling passages and stairways and mouldering chambers, to the waggon-roofed room in the older house, which some artist of three centuries ago has painted with curious allegorical devices, and with proverbs in black letter. The damp has nearly obliterated the colours and designs on one side, but on the other wall pictures and lettering are

still decipherable. Culross should take better care of this Chamber of Imageries and the other curiosities of the "Colonel's Close." Ralph Erskine was tutor here in the "Black Colonel's" time, and with other "Marrow Men" must often have handled the knottier points of Presbyterian doctrine and discipline under the gaze of the Virtues and the Sirens ; possibly the germ of the "Gospel Sonnets" might be found in these wise old saws teaching constancy and temperance and the brevity of earthly pomp and pleasure—

All flesh is grass, and withereth like the hay,
And warneth us how well to live, but not how long
to stay.

If we may trust Mr. Beveridge, the painstaking historian of Culross, these walls may have first been painted to please the eyes of the Modern Solomon, what time he banqueted with the elder Sir George Bruce in the "collier's house." We can figure him, curious and fearful, sallying forth, after dejeuner, to inspect the marvellous work which his host had constructed for mining the coal underneath the salt water, and how, coming again to the light of day in the sea-girdled "Moat," he "snookit lèse-majestie," like the King of like kidney in the "Yerl o' Watery-deck," and lustily shouted "Treason !"

The great Borrowing Days Storm of 1625, in

which King James's own light went out, drowned this "darke, light, pleasant, profitable Hell," as Taylor the Water Poet had called it, in his style of crazy epigram. The author of the *Pennilesse Pilgrimage* had come hither, drawn, as Defoe and Cobbett were after him, by curiosity and the reputation of the place; and greatly daring and much wondering he explored Bruce's work—

A long mile thus I past, doune doune, steepe steepe,
In deepenesse far more deepe than Neptune's deepe,
While o'er my head (in fourfold stories hie),
Was earth, and sea, and áyre, and sun, and skie.

By the ruins of the "Moat," over against the site of "Macduff's Castle" on Dunimarle, on the Tolbooth steps, or beside Bessie Bar's Well, were a good place to sit and ponder on the fallen fortunes of Culross. A few fowling-punts and pleasure-boats stick in the mud at low water off the little pier, outside which, as records tell us, one hundred and seventy sail would be waiting in the palmy days of the burgh to load coal or salt. The seams are worked out, and the coal-heughs closed. Of Culross's fifty salt-pans not one sends up its smoke. They are things of the past, like the processions carrying green boughs on Saint Serf's Day—like the click of the handloom, or the cheerful ring of the girdlesmith's hammer.

These leisurely old craftsmen, whose rules directed them to heat and temper the iron "so that it may last against fire an age or two," who would not hurry over their work, labouring only three days a week, "less otherways they should make too many and ill girdles," could not live in our days of high pressure and cheap and new-fangled invention. First went the monopoly; the girdle followed by and by. The town itself, like the "honest, worthy, harmless Hell" at the Moat, was drowned by a flood of debt and alien ideas, and little more than the wreck is left. True, it has its modest share of the blessings of modern civilisation. But who shall say that these comforts of old age are amends for the rich blood of youth? Even the water of Bessie's Spring, by which old Culross folks used to swear, as did the Jews by Jordan, has been tested by the analytic chemist and found wanting. An outland water, brought in pipes, has superseded it, and is doubtless worthy the judgment pronounced by the fishwife on the new Fisherrow supply—"Wersh stuff, wi' neither taste nor smell." May not the like be said of the present, when compared with the past, of this and other ancient Fife burghs?

Parting reluctantly from these meditations and from Culross, we follow the shore eastward, past the long line of white cottages of Low

Valleyfield. The tide is out, and across the mud flats and through the haze Preston Island, with its sheaf of ruined walls, looms up like some isle of enchantment. They are but the remains of abandoned coal and salt works. Nothing more romantic clings to them than legends of latter-day smuggling. But they look like the fragments of some mediæval strength or fane,



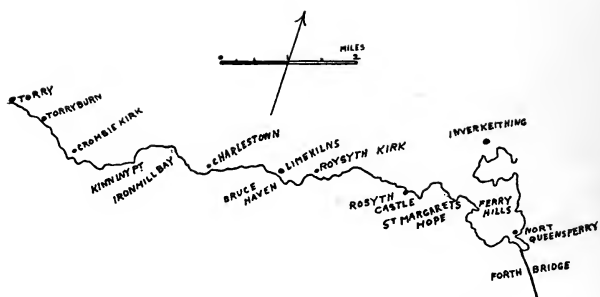
Preston Island.

saturated with crime or sanctity. Of all the misfortunes that have fallen on Culross Bay surely the worst were those "improvements" on Kincardine Moss, far up the river, that have covered the foreshore with black peat ooze. At the bridge over the Bluther Burn we pass the former confines of Perth and Fife. But still the dingy stain of bog-earth and coal-dust soils the fair curves of the beach. Valleyfield, Newmill, and Torryburn were upstart conspirators in the Fifty Years Girdle War that brought their neighbour burgh to naught. Now, as the dates

over the doorways tell us, their own best days are past a century ago. Good times would return, and the summer bather and tripper would flock to Culross Bay, could only some kind magician exchange its mud for the clean white sands of yore.

At the low green "ness" of Torry, where the highroad from Dunfermline comes down to the shore, we rest and look back. Here that West of Fife Cotton Mather, the Rev. Allan Logan, may have superintended the tethering of Torry witches below flood-mark. Here the Water Poet got his first glimpse of Culross Bay, as did after him Daniel Defoe, Bishop Pocock and William Cobbett, all of them travelling towards Alloa. The author of *Rural Rides* was reminded of the shores of Southampton Water and the skirts of the New Forest. Turner, the painter, is said, while a guest of Sir Robert Preston of Valleyfield, to have likened the scene to the Bay of Naples. Such comparisons are fushionless at best. It is our purpose to show that Fife has a native flavour of its own, and is spoiled when served with outlandish sauces.

TORRYBURN TO NORTH
QUEENSFERRY



TORRYBURN TO NORTH QUEENSFERRY

Oh-hoi, yeho ! who's for the Ferry?
The briar's in bud and the sun going down.

Twickenham Ferry.

TIME slips away unheeded in the Sleepy Hollow of Culross Bay. We have still a long road to go in the brief winter day to our haven at North Queensferry. The map does not show us the position of Old Crombie Kirk, and the snell air makes us hungry. We drop into the village inn for information and refreshment. Its kindly and homely Meg Dods attends to both wants to the best of her power.

"Of coorse it's different the like o' us buddies that kens a' the ways hereabouts, and goes through a' kind o' places," she remarks, as she places on the board the mulled stout and a noble supply of bread and cheese. And she proceeds to describe a by-way leading through the Craighflower grounds. "We ca' it," she adds, critically holding up a plate to the light to spy for dust,

and giving it a finishing polish on the full part of her dress, "the Floor Gairden, ye ken. It's a bonny place, the kirkyaird, but there's naething there, but kind o' auld bits o' grave-stanes."

We go on our way; but do not invade the "Floor Gairden," keeping instead by the shore, out upon which, from beneath a roadside stone inscribed "Torryburn Mineral Well, 1893," gushes a strong stream of ferruginous water. Crombie Kirk stands on a height. We climb over the gateway and drop into the old God's Acre. It is cumbered with grass-grown mounds and gray "through" stones and headstones, the resting-places of dead and gone shipmasters and saltmakers, artisans and "mediciners." Some bear the insignia of their craft—here a quadrant and there a hammer. In the centre is the ivy-clad ruin of the little church, in former times, with the whole of the ancient parish of Crombie, a possession of the monks of Culross. It has been roofless these two centuries and a half, and looks a likely place for the trysts of the Torryburn witches. Along the south side of the churchyard are a line of tall yews—ghostly sentinels keeping watch to seaward. In that direction there opens a bewitching view of the Firth and of the shores of Fife and Lothian, and this we enjoy, with many changes of angle and foreground as we follow for a couple of

miles the woodland walks skirting the steep brae-face and leading past Crombie Point, with its handful of houses and unfrequented little stone landing-pier, to the western horn of Ironmill Bay.

It is tame after Culross. But looking across it, Charlestown Harbour, overhung by the Broomhall woods, and with the masts and yards of its shipping forming a criss-cross pattern against the members of the great Bridge, looks a picturesque enough object. Reaching it, we find a tangle of railway sidings, with coal and lime trucks and stacks of pit-props, an outer and inner basin crowded with steamers and foreign sailing craft, and facing the quay a line of cyclopean draw-kilns and a shipchandler's shop. There is a village and village green, we learn, on the bank above, but as Charlestown and its mineral and shipping-trade are little more than a century old, we do not climb to see.

There is metal more attractive close by, at Limekilns. For a bold green background it has the cliffs and woods of Broomhall, the seat of the Bruces, Earls of Elgin, the much-loved early home of Lady Augusta Stanley, where among other cherished relics are kept the sword with which the hero of Bannockburn was knighted, and the bed in which Charles I. was born. The lean white houses of the village crouch below the rock, and seem to stare ruefully into the

shallow and deserted harbour, in search of the trade that has left and does not promise to return again in a hurry. The business of Limekilns was chiefly in the past. It owned once forty sail of coasting and sea-going craft, and employed one hundred and sixty ship-carpenters; and it boasts the ruins of the oldest of the salt-pans on the Forth. Now it cultivates the summer boarder. But in the winter, time seems to hang heavily on its hands; even the defaced sundials on the corners of the eaves speak of neglect of the passing hour. Up a little side street, and close under the cliff, an ancient building catches the eye. It is the "King's Cellar," where, haply, the "bluid-red wine" and other foreign delicacies were stored as they came from shipboard, when our Scottish Kings sat in Dunfermline Tower, and where almost certainly Secretary Pitcairne died, having come "sick out of Flanders," to meet the pest at Limekilns. There is an outside stair leading to the upper floor, and above it protrude the ribs of the vaulted roof. The date, 1581, which accompanies the well-preserved royal bearings above the doorway, belies a little the story of its great antiquity and traditional use.

A voice from an entry tells us to "go down the first close and up the second stair" for the key. The injunction is obeyed, and a buxom lass, kilted for house work—such like as she who brought

comfort and succour here to David Balfour and Alan Breck Stewart—presents herself.

“It’s nae use,” she says, on hearing the request ; and in answer to a mute appeal for enlightenment, she adds, “it’s awa wi’t.” Further explanation being asked, she continues, “ye’ll be for haddin’ a public meetin’?” When it is known that we only want a peep inside, her father is summoned. With the aid of this old residerter we gain admission to the building, and find ourselves in a long and lofty vaulted chamber. Two splayed windows are cut through a great thickness of wall, but one of them is boarded up, and the high-pitched Gothic roof is lost in shadow. A couple of rough forms are drawn up on each side of an old table, on which are two battered candlesticks holding guttered dips. It is like a hall in the “Chateau of Misery,” this mildewed woe-begone place. But it had been used, after its fortunes began to decline, as a school, which Limekilns “ca’d an Academy” ; and, as we discover by candle light, a part of the eastern end, next the roundel tower that communicates with the vaults below, had once been partitioned off as the “Public Library.”

“Naebody comes here langer,” we are told, “but the remains o’ the auld Beerial Society ; and little they’ve left to do except beery ane anither.” The table and other properties be-

long, it appears, to this antique remnant. It were worth while to watch them as they pore over their funeral account books, with the candle light throwing up grotesque shadows on walls and roof.

Outside, our ancient guide informs us that his father-in-law minded when there was another storey to the King's Cellar ; "he could tell ye a' about it," he adds. We inquire with interest where this venerable authority is to be found. "In Rosyth ; he's deid, of coorse," is the reply, not without a touch of the Fifer's wonder at the ignorance of the stranger.

Rosyth churchyard is on a spur of the coast, half a mile to the east of Brucehaven. It has been said that those tiny and ancient burial-grounds on the sea margin are characteristic of the fringes of Fife. One at least we have already come upon, and there are many ahead—Dalgety, Kinghorn, St. Monans, and others. But perhaps there is none more lonely and eerie than Rosyth, at anyrate at the close of a winter day, when a rising wind is souging through the bare branches, and the sea is beginning to moan and tramp to and fro over rock and shingle. A little grove of trees surrounds and shelters it on the land side. Elsewhere the Firth is its boundary, and from the beach you climb over the stile into the churchyard. Of the church all that remains is

the ruined north wall and the east gable, pierced by two graceful lancet windows, half screened by ivy. In the gathering dusk we spell out the inscriptions, and note how many who now sleep soundly to the lapping of the waves were of those who go down to the sea in ships and do business on the mighty waters. In this restful nook are garnered up all the life and movement of past generations of Limekilns and the country round—rough mariners who made many a stormy voyage to Campvere and Bergen and Nantes without paying kaine to the sea; and dour and stern-faced weavers and salters who have trudged weary miles inland to the “Holy Fair” of Carnock to listen to the preaching of Row, or, long after, to partake of the marrow of Gillespie’s communion exhortations, or have climbed the Hill of Beath to hear from the lips of Mr. John Blackadder the story of his sufferings at the hands of men of Belial.

The churchyard of Rosyth is a choice place to moralise over the vanity of the race for gold, and the strifes of sects and factions. So, also, is the courtyard of Rosyth Castle. The sun had set behind an angry bank of cloud when we reached the tall grim keep rising from the green island, joined by a causeway to the land. Here, some tell us, at the “landing-place of the headland,” Margaret, Saint and Queen, with her brother the

Atheling, her mother and sister, and the refugee Anglian lords, must have stepped ashore, after finding shelter in St. Margaret's Hope, to be received with open arms by Malcolm Greathead,



Rosyth Castle.

and to change the course of Scottish and Fife history. Here, five hundred years later, as seems partly attested by the date 1561 and the initials "M. R." above the portal, Mary Stuart rested on one of her many journeys through Fife. Cromwell's mother is said to have been of the family of the Stewarts of Rosyth, and Carlyle tells us

that the genealogists have indubitably proved that Oliver was "the fractional part of half a cousin" of the Royal Martyr. Little the stern-souled Protector recked of sentimental reasons for sparing the place when, from the other side of the Forth he watched his troopers battering the keep, after his army had stolen a march across the Ferry and gained for him his "unspeakable mercy" on the hills behind Inverkeithing.

It is too dark—even had the stone still been in place—to read the hospitable legend written over the doorway that enters from the courtyard—

In . dev . tym . dra . yis . cord . ye . bel . to . clink .
Quhais . mery . voce . warnis . to . mete . and . drink .

There is little of mirth or welcome in the present aspect of the ancient hold. The light from the western sky is drawn like a smear of red fingers across the mullions of the great tower and the broken edges of the chapel walls; and the tide pools around seem filled with "lappered bluid."

At the "loanhead of Rosyth" an abbot of Culross was foully slain by the Laird of Tulliallan, with the help of a monk of his own convent. He was Sir James Inglis, a "makar" of plays and satires in high repute at the court of James IV. Sir David Lyndesay says of him—

Who can say more than Sir James Inglis says
In ballads, farces, and in pleasant plays.
But Culross hath his pen made impotent.

He gave up his ballad-making to superintend the copyists of psalters and breviaries, and to fall into deadly feud with the Blackadders.

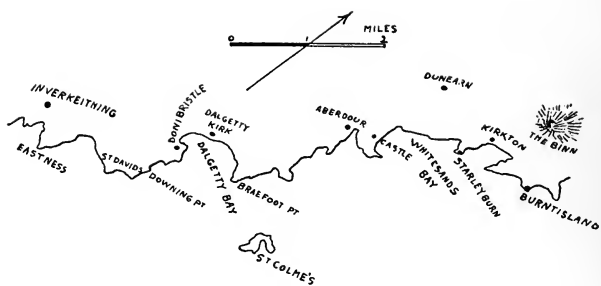
From the Loanhead we hie us by road towards the neck of the peninsula, and over the gusty Ferry Hills. The wind and the stars are out, and on such a night the fancy likes to dally with what might have been, as well as with what was and is. The Jews, it is said, were once in treaty with Alexander III. to purchase this promontory and build on it their city of refuge. Golf is played on the plateau where the synagogues might have been pitched; the railway, the main line of traffic between North and South, burrows and quarries beside the track once followed by the pilgrims on their way to St. Margaret's Shrine. At length we look down upon the many lights twinkling in the village of North Queensferry and gleaming far out on the water. Above us the Forth Bridge hangs like a huge and dusky cobweb stretched across the mile of firth, and fastened midway on Inchgarvie. Roy of Aldivalloch once held the island fort with a company of Royalist musketeers, until turned out by General Lambert. It is now used to signal to passing

Torryburn to North Queensferry 33

vessels the waterways under the great cantilevers. As we look the new spirit of the scene comes sweeping with roar and flame across the centre of its iron web, and plunges into its cavern ; and we step downward to the rest and solace of our inn.



INVERKEITHING TO
BURNTISLAND



INVERKEITHING TO BURNTISLAND

Let's talk of graves, and worms, and epitaphs.—*Richard II.*

AT Inverkeithing, hunkering on its hillside looking towards the south-east, we light down on one of the rare mornings in a season of wet and storm when the sun shines out brightly if briefly before mid-day. In this light the spacious main street of the burgh puts on a cheerful air. But it has a patched and clouted look ; as of something old and substantial that has been repaired with more flimsy materials. The heavy stone forestairs, the arched or moulded doorways, and the tiled roofs, corbie-stepped at the gables and bearing tiers of windows and chimneys between eaves and ridge, do not compose well with the modern bank and shop-front.

Looking eastward the vista is closed by the Parish Church, dedicated to St. Peter ; and it may well be taken as an epitome of the burgh

architecture. It has a long history, having been gifted to the Abbey of Dunfermline in 1126 by Waldeve, the son of the great Earl Gospatrick of Dunbar. The weather-battered western tower, middle pointed in style, is nearly all that remains of the pre-Reformation Church ; and it has been furnished with a tasteless and incongruous doorway and capped by a modern clock-spire. The body of the building has been thrice burned ; it was last rebuilt nearly seventy years ago, and considering the taste of the time the interior is better than one might have looked for. The chief curiosity of St. Peter's is its ancient font, a perfect example of its kind and date, decorated with six panels containing boldly blazoned shields supported by flat-faced angels with curled locks. It has been preserved and restored to its original use more "by luck than guid guiding." The bowl was found early in the century buried in straw under the entrance porch below the tower, and it was fitted to the pedestal which had lain neglected in the churchyard. Within it were bones—evidently relics, for the sake of which the font had been hid away ; an irreverent and ungrateful age cast them forth.

On the north side of the street stood, till lately, two venerable buildings with roundel towers. One has been cleared away—old houses, like old bones, must give place. The other, sadly battered

by time and ill-usage, still holds its place opposite the Kirk door. Says the good woman who had shown us through St. Peter's, "There's a wheen poor folk in the riggin', and the Mission Hall's below." "It's no considered safe for onything else," she naively adds. We climb up and look in on the "poor folk"; they are affable if clarty. "Fine, hoo are ye yersels; come awa ben," is the response to our greeting. "This was Clavers's hoose, and here's whaur the King sleepit," we are told; "and here" (leading the way to the roundel turret) "was whaur they keepit the spies."

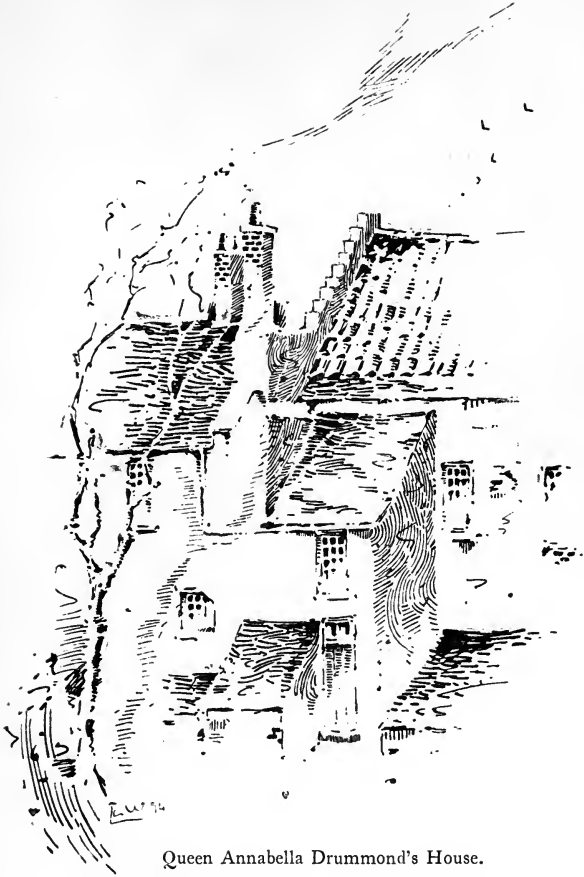
There are two islands of houses in the high street of Inverkeithing. One is at the east end, where the thoroughfare forks, sending a branch up the slope past the Church, and another down the hill towards the Keithing burn; it screens the pepperbox tower of the Town House and the handsome shaft, with a heraldic capital surmounted by a unicorn, of the ancient Town Cross. The other is at the west end; like a breakwater it seems to shelter from the impact of



Inverkeithing Town Hall.

modern influences the great rambling fabric behind known as Rothmells Inn.

The vast expanse of white wall turned to the little back street has a window dotted here and there; and built against it are two huge outer stairs. Symmetry has been set at naught in every line, exterior and interior, of this structure, built, we are told, to be a Queen's Palace; and we like it all the better for its manifold irregularities and surprises. Queen Annabella Drummond is the only one of its many royal guests and residents of whom Inverkeithing retains a definite memory; perhaps because her dwelling was placed outside of burgh jurisdiction, and the Magistrates were bound to pay her one hundred shillings on Pentecost Day. She was of the Drummonds of Stobhall, a family famed for the loveliness of feature and complexion of their women, and, as old Holinshed states, she was married rather for her singular beauty "than for anie benefit that might grow to the Commonwealth from her alliance." Yet has history a good word to say of her domestic virtues and of her prudence in counsel. Great sorrows visited her in Inverkeithing; of her two sons, David, Duke of Rothesay, was foully done to death at Falkland, and James I., the Poet King, fell under the assassins' daggers in the Blackfriars Monastery at Perth. Local tradition, ever fanciful, would



Queen Annabella Drummond's House.

give her other griefs. It pictures her as a forsaken Queen, sitting at her bower window, where she could gaze across the reaches of the bay and Firth to where the rock and castle of Edinburgh seem to hang half in air.

Oh, waly ! waly ! love be bonnie
A little while when it is new ;
But when it's auld it waxeth cauld
And fades awa like mornin' dew.

King Robert III. was a weak Prince, but he was neither bad man nor faithless husband ; and the beautiful mistress of Rothmells Inn may have looked with calmer eyes and happier thoughts on the bitter and restless waters sundering her from Court than did other minions of fortune who afterwards watched from this portion of the fringes of Fife the scene of their former pomp and power. The "Queen's Chambers" are a quaint set of rooms, from the first of which you plunge down a few steps into what may have been the boudoir, or ascend not less abruptly to the sleeping apartment overhead. The former is vaulted, and has other two windows besides the arched and now half-built-up casement opening on the sea and the south ; and both rooms command a prospect worthy of the eyes of a beautiful Queen. The grand old kitchen, also vaulted, with the huge fireplace and the light

coming in over the doorway through an immense thickness of solid wall, should not be missed.

Behind there is a well-kept space of ground sloping down towards the shore, and in it are a range of ecclesiastical vaults, that may have belonged to the Franciscan Monastery; or they may be remains of the Queen's oratory. All the old houses on this sunny side of the Inverkeithing main street have their long gardens running downhill, with high walls, and here and there an ancient doocot separating them from the turbid waters of the burn and the muddy harbour, which the ebbing tide is leaving bare.

As we linger a rain squall comes blattering over the Ferry Hills, darkening the sky and hiding the sun. This, after all, is the right light in which to view Inverkeithing. It has not fulfilled the bright promise of its morning. It has itself played for centuries the part of the deserted favourite, and watched trade and importance drift away from it down the Firth and across the water. No burgh-royal of the Kingdom had a better or earlier start. In its younger years privileges and honours fairly rained on it. "King David I. dwell'd sometime in it; in King William's reign it flourished much," says the learned but not too accurate Sibbald. It is certain that later sovereigns halted at it often on their journeys by sea and land, and signed there charters and decrees.

It had power of pit and gallows ; the Provost had the right of riding next to the Chief Magistrate of Edinburgh at the meeting of the Scottish Estates ; it owned jurisdiction from the Devon to the Leven, took toll of all the ships that passed through the narrows, and collected fair dues and customs as far inland as Kinross. Nor were Church favours wanting. The Culdees, that mysterious religious order which seems to have had its beginning and end in Fife, are said to have held their last assemblage at Inverkeithing. Monasteries of the White and Black Friars afterwards took the place, and probably the property, of the monks of the old rule.

This day the good town seems half asleep, and such of the inhabitants as we speak to only half awake, as we leave it and skirt the oozy margin of the bay, fast emptying with the ebb-tide. The only sound is the clatter of the riveters' hammers in the shipbuilding yard ; and this dies away before we reach the spot where the crescent horns of Inverkeithing Bay approach each other at the East and the West Ness—the latter formerly a quarantine station and lazaretto house, now put to more cheerful use as sea-bathing quarters.

Keeping the shore path for St. Davids, another pelting rain shower overtakes us, and we flee for shelter to a wooden shed facing the sea and the blast. Towards us come two grave-faced men, an

elder and a younger, the former with a sack round his shoulders, while the other bears an iron pail.

"Ye'll hae mair elbowroom and less weet inside," they civilly remark to us, standing in the slushy doorway. "We'll need a' the licht."

We give place.

"Whammle the pail, Richie," says he of the sack. The pail is whammled where the mud was ankle-deep; he sits down, and his companion, producing huge tailor's shears, proceeds in solemn silence to prune his locks, as if hair-cutting in a rain squall on a lonely sea-shore, out of hail of human habitation, were the most ordinary thing in life. But strange things happen in Fife.

Before the operation is over the rain has eased off, and we move round by the little coal-ing-port of St. Davids and begin to trace the Donibristle shore. Here the Fife coast is scalloped into deep bays and bold headlands, off which are sprinkled islands and stacks of sea-washed rock. Trees fringe the bights and crown most of the promontories that run their black noses out into the water; and behind are the lawns and groves of a noble demesne. It is a winding way to follow the shore, but each turn in it brings some delightful surprise.

Behind the sharp snout of Downing Point, on a curving platform overlooking the Firth, we

come on what the fire has left of Donibristle House. It has "dreed its weird" by being thrice burned. The last time was in 1858, and it has never been rebuilt. The walls of the central block of building, in the Queen Anne style, stand up gaunt and desolate. Time has not yet—and probably never will—put any beautifying touch on them or on the dismal mortuary chapel in the clump of trees behind, where the Earls of Moray are buried. The two wings are at a much lower level, and are intact. There is no above-ground connection; but the smooth green turf, bounded to seaward by a staircase descending to the shore, and by a magnificent decorative gateway of old Dutch hammered work, presented by "Great Anna" to a Lady Moray in the first year of last century, sounds hollow underfoot. It is honey-combed with underground passages; and thereby hangs the tale of Donibristle—the tragedy of the "Bonnie Earl o' Moray." That was the time of the first burning, in 1592. Of the braw gallant himself we know little that is admirable, beyond his "weel-faured face." But he was the son-in-law of that Regent Moray whom his friends called the "Good," and for whom his enemies had another name. You can still see at Donibristle the beautiful old carved oak chair, bearing his initials. In it, a generation earlier,

the Regent sat grimly awaiting news of the murder of Darnley, in which, like his neighbour and successor in power, Morton, he is suspected of being "art and part." The Bonnie Earl was sib to the King and a leader of the Protestant faction ; while his murderers were in the other boat, and mixed afterwards in the Spanish Blanks and other dark intrigues of the time ; and thus the business took a strong hold of the popular mind—

Ye Hiellands and ye Lowlands,
 Oh whaur hae ye been !
 They've slain the Yerl o' Moray
 That sud ha been the King.

Some obscure blood-letting up in the North was the beginning of the feud with the Gordons ; although the people's suspicions ran in another channel.

The Bonnie Yerl o' Moray
 He was the Queen's love.

In pursuit of his revenge, Lord Huntley started from Edinburgh late on a February evening, and crossing at Queensferry with his company set fire to the unprotected and ungarrisoned House of Donibristle. It was then that Dunbar, the "Tutor of Moray," gave his rare proof of devotion to the death. For the Earl, "wissing not quhither to come out and be slaine or be burned

quicke," the Tutor volunteered to go first out of the gate so that (said he) "the peopell will chaarge on me, thinking me to be your lordshipe ; sae, it being mirke under nycht ; ye sall come out after me and look if that ye can fend for yourself." Dunbar fell under the weapons of the Gordons, and Moray escaped by the subterranean passage leading through the eastern pavilion to the shore, and sat down among the rocks to draw breath. But, by ill hap, according to the quaint relation in Birrell's *Diary*, "the said lord's cnapsnull tippet quherone ves a silk stringe had taken fyre, vich betrayed him to his enimies in ye darknesse of ye nycht," and they were upon him before he knew. Gordon of Buckie gave the deadly wound, and Huntley himself, it is said, slashed the face of the dying man, who turned upon him with the words, "You've spoiled a better face than your own."

The blood of the young Earl—he was but four-and-twenty years of age—cried long in vain for vengeance, although his mother had the corpse borne on a bier two days later from Leith to St. Giles Kirk, with a banner (still preserved at Donibristle) whereon was painted the naked body and its wounds, with the device "God Avenge my Cause." One touch of sweet truth and charity there is in this dark tale of blood. For Captain John Gordon of Gicht, left for

dead at the gate of Donibristle by his own party (after they had stripped him), was taken in and "cherished with meat, drink, and clothing" by the dead Earl's mother. Truly a strange compound of savage and of noble qualities were those men and women of three centuries ago!

The home-farm of Donibristle is the scene of a reputed victory won by Sinclair, the "Fechting Bishop" of Dunkeld, over the English in the time of the War of Independence. A better authenticated act of heroism took place here in the summer before the Waterloo year. Robert Moffat, the missionary, was employed as a journeyman in the Donibristle gardens, and he nearly lost his own life in rescuing that of a fellow-workman who was on the point of drowning in the Forth off the little quay.

Round the next turn of the coast we come on Dalgety Bay. The shore curves like a bent bow, and at the centre of the arc is Old Dalgety Kirk. A brook tumbles out on the beach on one side of the churchyard wall, and the old Kirk road dips to the sea on the other. So secluded is the nook, and so closely are the trees set about the roofless gray walls of St. Bridget's Church, that you are close under them before you are aware they are near. Even then you have to look twice before you are sure whether it is a ruined mansion or a "Kirk deserted by its

riggin' " that is hid away here by the sea-shore. At the western end rise a sheaf of gables—two crowned by crescents, a third by a belfry and bell, with the mark of the bell-rope cut deep into the stone, and a fourth by a chimney. By a turnpike stair you ascend to the sacristy. It is a room panelled with moulded stone, and has a snug sanctum with a fireplace beyond. You love to believe, as a mark of grace and Christian charity in an age of ejected ministers and rabbled curates, the story of the Presbyterian pastor who was allowed by the kind-hearted "Prelatic" appointed in his stead to shelter for twenty years his head here in the Killing Time.

A church, successor to a Culdee cell, has stood on this spot for more than seven hundred years. The ivy is busy tugging down the eastern gable. Built into the inside wall is a fine slab, inscribed in boldly raised characters to "Ane honorabil man callit Villiam Abernethie of Dagati," with the date "1540." A later possessor was that great pluralist and sagacious lawyer and statesman Chancellor Seton, Earl of Dunfermline, to whose charge the Modern Solomon committed the care of the princes, Henry and Charles. He was buried at Dalgety in 1622, in the vault under the priest's chamber, with great state. A contemporary description of the funeral mentions, among the lugubrious paraphernalia of grief,

“Ane Morthead, painted on black Tefety,
Poudered with teares, on a speir’s poynt.” The
nobility of the Kingdom were assembled at “ye



Dalgety Church.

good Kirk or Chappell at ye Seaside,” and “an
excellent Sermone was maid by Mr. Spotswood,
Archbishope of St. Andrews.” One of the last
to preach in Old Dalgety Church was Edward
Irving.

All trace of the Chancellor’s “Place of Dal-

gety" and of Dalgety village has disappeared. The birds of the air and of the sea have now undisputed possession. A flight of mallard springs squattering from the shallower waters as we tramp the lonely shore towards Braefoot Point. Sandpipers rise and light again among the wreckage heaped up by the westerly gales. From under the group of low gnarled pines on the headland, writhing and grovelling as if in agony, a sooty-gray waterhen starts up, and trailing its green legs makes a sweep back again to cover. Off the ruddy-brown rocks of basalt that stretch out towards Inchcolm razorbills and guillemots bob and dive.

Travellers were not always such ferlies on this track. The Abbots of Inchcolm had a residence and grange at Donibristle. The canons and choristers of that "nocht obskure monastar," as Bishop Lesley calls it, served Dalgety Kirk; and there were many passings to and fro across the dangerous mile of firth.

To-day we cross not Mortimer's Deep; Inchcolm is but a bit of hazy background in our picture of Fife. But resting beside the old monks' landing-place and looking across the mile-broad reach of sea that separates us from the square gray tower that shows against the sky from the sheltered hollow in the "island salt and bare," we almost seem to hear again the chime of the

Abbey bells, silent these three and a half centuries, borne across the water. There is a briny flavour and an air of miracle about Inchcolm and all its memories. It was *Æmonia* before it was St. Colme's Inch; the Druid's Isle before being "the Isle of Saints." The sea-robbers vexed it long before, and long after, the time recorded by Shakespeare, when "Sweno, Norway's King," disbursed on it ten thousand dollars to Macbeth and Banquo for right of sepulture to his men. It was in 1123 that Alexander the Fierce, caught in a storm while crossing, on affairs of State, to Inverkeithing, was glad to crawl ashore and find shelter with its hermit, probably in the rude stone-roofed oratory that remains until this day. He found more *lenten* entertainment than the Black Knight met with from the Clerk of Copmanhurst,—dulse, cockles, and the milk of the "ae coo" that grazed the island. But in gratitude he founded a priory of Augustinian canons-regular; which was afterwards endowed with rich gifts, among others by that Mortimer, Lord of Aberdour, whose body the monks dropped overboard in the channel that still bears his name. They kept his lands, but would have none of his bones.

For the rest, the patron saint looked jealously after the interests of his shrine and island, so long as the Old Religion prevailed. The monks of

Derry and Iona knew Columba in life as a "man of strife," dangerous to cross; and if we may believe the marvels related by Abbot Bowmaker, Fordun's continuator, who wrote his *Scotichronicon* in the Scriptorium of Inchcolm, the same imperious temper marked his post-mortem guardianship. English sea-reivers who pillaged the Abbey lands and carried away the Abbey plate and valuables, were sent ship and man to the bottom of the Firth by the irate Saint, or were visited by storms and aches and misfortunes until they were glad to return and do penance. Well might the ancient mariners dub him St. Qualm! But he was powerless to avenge himself on the greedy hands that at the Reformation snatched at the Abbey itself and all its possessions; and Inchcolm degenerated into a pirate's hold, a fortification, and a lazaretto; and so faded out of history. It was a spot after the heart of the bold and solitary spirit who sang of his delight "in the salt sea, where the sea-gulls cry."

To sit on the pinnacle of the rock
That I might often look
On the face of ocean;
That I might hear the thunder of the crowding
waves
Upon the rocks;
The roar by the side of the church
Of the surrounding sea.

Half-an-hour later we are standing in the outer solitude of the main street of Aberdour. The life and movement of the gusty March day are shut in behind the big gates of Donibristle,—the flashes of white, from breaking waves or sea-birds' wings, that come and go among the shore rocks ; the blackbirds and chaffinches, busy in the walks and coppices ; the rooks balancing on the high bare branches and interrupting, with their noisy discussion of the great housekeeping question, the sigh of the wind in the beech trees.

Looking eastward along the deserted village highway, the only objects visible are a wheelbarrow standing before a door, and a pump swathed in straw against the frost. Those who pay it only fair-weather summer visits do not rightly know their Aberdour. They should come hither in the drear season on the debatable line of winter and spring, when they can have it all to themselves. Not a tripper lingers under the shade of the beeches by the Silver Sands, or watches from the outlook on the Hawkraig the coming and going of the steamers at the pier below. The pleasure-craft are hauled up high and dry beyond the mud of the little harbour ; and the Tea Gardens are a desolation.

By and by, as you watch from the windows of the village inn—chosen on grounds of character and not of style—the village types, which creep

out of sight when strangers are about, come forth ; the sleepy village life circulates. A chain of carts clatters along the street, bringing heads to the doors and windows ; a tramp or a commercial traveller's gig brings whiffs of outside influence and excitement. In the old days, when, instead of being invaded by crowds of summer bathers and loungers it was the resort of pilgrims to its Holy Well, Aberdour had probably the same alternating periods of stir and rest. It has lost all trace of its waters of healing, and no longer knows even the site of the nunnery of sisters of St. Francis—the Hospital of St. Martha—established in the Easter village by a pious Countess of Morton for the entertainment of poor travellers. The water of the Pilgrims' Well was a sovereign remedy for sore eyes. Aberdour is still a "sicht for sair een." Its great charm and virtue is in its situation. Its bay is a dimple of beauty in the stern lineaments of Fife ; and lovely it remains, even in March weather, and after the railway has drawn an ugly scratch across its wooded slopes.

Narrowly has the line missed rooting up the foundations of the Castle, nodding to its ruin over the dell of the Dour. To-day it expresses three ages of neglect and decay. At the western end is the ancient keep. The flail of the winds has mercilessly pounded the strong walls, and

great fragments have rolled down the slope towards the burn. Within, dark and noisome weeds make the ruin hideous as well as melancholy.



Aberdour Castle.

The central portion of the Castle is of later date. There is a long gallery on the upper floor still roofed over, and filled from end to end with hay. Access is got to it by a roundel tower and newel stair from the courtyard behind, and its windows

overlook towards the south the narrow garden and bowling alley, screened by their high wall, and beyond these the smooth green slopes descending to the bay and the Firth. The chamber had been used as a public school and as cavalry barracks before descending to the estate of a hay-loft. The eastern wing is dilapidated enough, but still habitable and inhabited. The style and the date (1635) on the fine old circular sundial near the southern doorway indicate that this part of the building was erected in the time of William, Earl of Morton, who spent his all in the cause of the First Charles. A healthy family of youngsters are at their meal in the room where, we are told, there is a fine painted ceiling of the same period. But it is papered over and whitewashed. The present owners of the Castle seem to have no care or interest in the pile that has been in the hands of the family through good and evil fortune for four hundred years, and "they'll no put in a pane o' glass," we hear.

We borrow a little girl to guide us to the ancient Church of Aberdour, standing close under the Castle walls. "Do the ghosts disturb you?" we ask, as she fumbles at the lock of the old orchard. "Na; they never come near us," she tells us gravely. Doubtless they are content with their own wide and growing territory within the

Castle walls, and avoid the remote nook where there is still a spark of human life and warmth,—

The leal Guidman o' Aberdour
Sits in Sir Alan Vipont's tower,—

and on moonlight nights watches the elves dance on the greensward below, whence they spirited away the Baron's daughter to the land of Faëry. After the Viponts followed the Mortimers. The Regent Randolph was a later possessor, and gifted the Cullalo Hills, whose dark ridge, stretching away towards Dunearn Hill and the Binn of Burntisland, fended Aberdour from the north winds, to the monks of Dunfermline, to sing masses for the soul of his uncle, the Bruce. The Douglasses, Earls of Morton, of the doughty line of the Knight of Liddesdale, came next, and last. If any unquiet ghost inhabit these ruins, it must be that of the Regent Morton—regents were rife of old in this strip of Fife. That type of the rapacious and unscrupulous time-server of his age sought this retreat in Fife, after his fall from power had driven him from Holyrood and Dalkeith. He was the inventor of the Tulchan Bishop and of the Maiden; and his own neck, it is said, was among the first on which the new heading-knife descended. More than his own soul he loved to gather gold and heap stone on stone. He was executed for being accessory to

the tragedy of Kirk o' Field, and for clipping the King's coin. One can easily fancy the perturbed spirit of the man of blood girning and glowering across the Firth from the empty windows of Aberdour, and muttering the curse of one of his kin,—

Edinburgh Castle, town and tower,
God grant you sink for sin ;
And that even for the black dinoure,
Earl Douglas gat therein,—

or haunting the spot, never yet found by any treasure-seeker, where, under the "braid stane before the gate of Aberdour," his ill-gotten wealth is hid.

Fig trees still grow against the high orchard walls facing the west and south, and in their withered fruit our guide takes more interest than in ghosts. "There was a ripe ane last year," she confides to us—one last memory, enticed to life by the sun of a warm summer, of Aberdour's Age of Gold.

A key to the enclosure of St. Fillan's Church is not forthcoming, and we clamber over. Thus, like thieves in the night, have we to climb the walls of most of these old Fife churchyards ; and here the feat is complicated by barbed wire. Could not the simple device of a stile be provided, so that in order to meditate among the tombs one need not run the risk of bruised limbs and

torn clothes? Perhaps not one in a thousand of Aberdour's visitors wanders into this green and quiet nook. The loss is theirs. Hidden although it be among gray walls and shadowing trees, it has an airy lookout over one of the loveliest landscapes in Fife. Beyond the gentle swell and fall of the lawns descending to the burn and the harbour, there is a glimpse of the Firth and its islands, framed by the cliffs and trees of the Hawkcraig and of Cuttlehill, this last crowned by an obelisk raised by the Lords of Aberdour as a landmark by which their Fife seat might be seen from their Lothian home at Dalmahoy. Here may one glance cheerfully abroad upon a beautiful world, or brood on tombs and worms and epitaphs. The village is shut out by the screen of walls and trees. The crumbling castle and the doocot are the nearest neighbours of the roofless church.

It is a venerable but composite fabric, containing a nave communicating through a Norman doorway with a chancel, and separated by three fine semicircular arches of wide span from what was the south aisle. Huge trees, the roots of which still cumber the nave, have had time to grow up since the church was unroofed. The Pilgrims' Well sprang from close below the churchyard wall, before it was drained and buried out of sight and memory ("Thrift, thrift, Horatio!").

Built into the wall of the aisle is the tombstone of that unflinching Covenanter, the Rev. Robert Blair, minister of the Town Church of St. Andrews—Sharp's adversary, whom the Archbishop hunted out of St. Rule's as far as Couston, where he died, worn out with labours of body and spirit. It was he who dubbed Cromwell "a greetin' deevil," and who, after he had been chaplain to Charles I., reproved his wife (says legend) because she offered a chair in the manse to that unsatisfactory specimen of a Covenanting King, the Merry Monarch: so exacting was conscience two centuries ago. The author of *The Grave* was his grandson and namesake, and from this stern saint and presbyter have sprung other celebrated Blairs,—lawyers, divines, rhetoricians, and men of science. A tablet to the Listons, father and son, ministers for many years of the parish, reminds us, too, that the forebears of the famous surgeon, Robert Liston, sleep at Aberdour.

It is time to be climbing walls again, and making our way through the grove of magnificent beeches and sycamores belting the "Silver Sands." On the hill above is Humble farm, where Carlyle rested or wrestled on his way through "the Valley of the Shadow of Frederick"; on the strand below, it is feigned, Sir Patrick Spens, of the grand old ballad, paced with the "braid

letter" in his hand that sent him on his fateful voyage "to Norrowa' over the faem." The footpath winds onward, round the elbows and



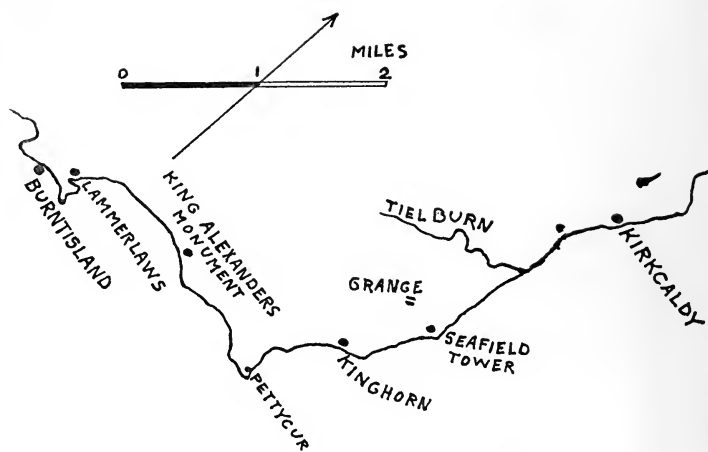
Rossend Castle Gateway.

curves of the coast towards Burntisland, now full in sight beyond the woods of Rossend Castle, with Inchkeith showing clear outside. In other days there would have been more temptation to loiter over this part of the road. In other days

the path wound up and down a brae-face clothed with wood, and in and out among rocks and trees. The railway has passed this way, scoring and flaying the hillside. For moss and ivy and wild-flowers one is offered the recompense of a good level track bounded by solid stone and lime. It is still a beautiful walk ; but to enjoy it one must forget what has been. The views to seaward cannot be spoiled ; but the alternate light and shadow of the foreground, the glory of the Hewes Woods, has vanished.

And so we come to Starleyburn, with its waterfall and petrifying spring and little harbour, where formerly "the King's ships came to water," a practice which, one would think, must have formed large deposits of lime in the "inwards" of the royal navy. Finally to Burntisland, "waiting"—as wrote the Lord Protector from this *Portus Salutis*, nigh two and a half centuries ago—"waiting what way God will further lead us."

BURNTISLAND TO KIRKCALDY



BURNTISLAND TO KIRKCALDY

Burntisland for salted herring,
Kinghorn for cursing and swearing.

Fife Saying.

Cockly Carcawdy, facing the sea.

Richard Franck, 1656.

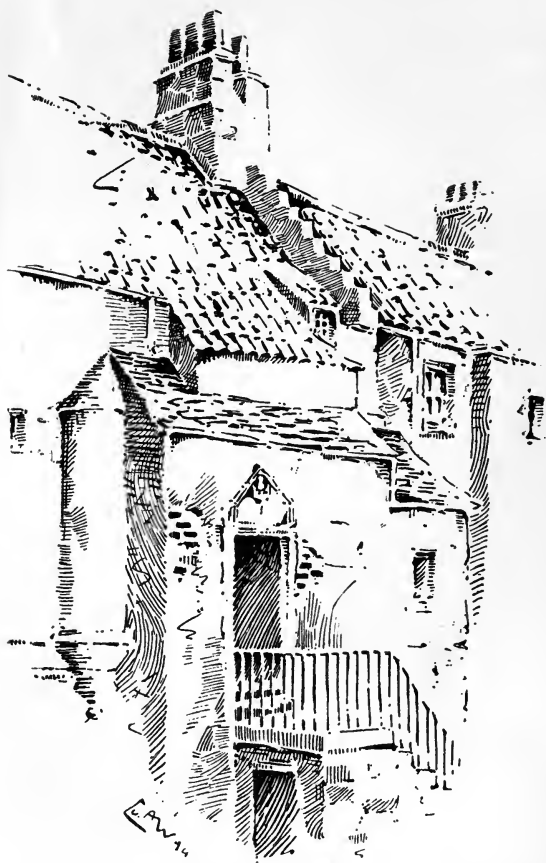
AFTER having approached Burntisland in many ways and in all weathers, by sea and by land, we decide that the praise for dramatic effect belongs to entry by rail from the west. It is like the shifting of scenes in a theatre. You are traversing green meadows down by the sea, which winds a loving arm around the peninsula of Rossend and stretches its fingers through the hollow land towards the Kirkton, when suddenly you have broken through a thin partition of rock and are crossing the space where a broad thoroughfare meets a busy quay. Behind the wall were solitude and peace—cows pasturing by the tide marshes and rooks circling overhead. Here are the thunder of truck-loads of coal roaring down the shoots into the wombs of loading

steamers, the screams of locomotives, and the clank and creak of steam-cranes. Another plunge, and you are out beyond the station, with the sea beating on the rocks below you and the churchyard walls on the cliff overhead.

All this part of Fife is wrinkled and furrowed in ridge and hollow like a chafed sea ; it is the shape into which the solid land settled down after the fires that have heaved up the great billow of the Binn and Dunearn Hill ceased to vex it. The main street of Burntisland is in the trough between two of these lower waves of igneous rock, from the crest of one of which Rossend Castle looks down into the harbour, while the other is crowned by the square stolid mass of the Parish Church. Whether the sea ever flowed behind these barriers, making the place an island, let the geologists and the philologists settle among them. This at least is certain, that, under whatever name it has been known—Wester Kinghorn, Cuningarland, Bertiland—the sea has always been the life-blood of Burntisland, and its port its chief livelihood. Agricola's galleys no doubt came feeling their way round the horn of Rossend when he "sounded the havens on the north coast of Forth," Fife being then an unknown land of savages ; and the Roman eagles are believed to have taken up their airy station near the crater-lake on Dunearn.

And down through the centuries commerce and war have kept an eye on the site. Cromwell took it; and having captured "great store of great artillery and divers ships," he found the town "well-seated, pretty strong, but marvellous capable of further improvement." It is said that the town, in surrendering, drove a canny bargain, by which the conqueror engaged to solidly pave the streets and repair the harbour, besides fortifying the heights above it; and some of Cromwell's handiwork is extant to this hour.

There are still in Burntisland houses that must have been standing in the Protector's day. The street features of a Fife burgh yield slowly to the influences of time; the old disputes every foot of ground with the new. At the corner of Harbour Place and High Street, the very spot against which the scour and rush of the current of trade bear most strongly, there is a grim-visaged ancient building with a huge roof of gray slate, standing like some hard-grained and stubborn rock in a tide-race, an embodied protest against the spirit of change. Long may it stand! And elsewhere, not only in the back streets reached by winding lanes and flights of steps, but in the line of the main thoroughfare, there are well-preserved specimens of the domestic architecture of a former day, bearing, many of them, the mark of that kindly custom, once



Old House, Burntisland.

much honoured in the Kingdom, by which the spouses inscribed the date and their initials on the front of the dwelling, linking the letters together by a heart, a lozenge, or some craft device, and enclosing them in a moulding or scroll, along with a text of Scripture, or, it might be, an armorial crest, if they had claims of long descent. These speak eloquently of the comfortable well-to-do citizen life, of the family affections, frugal in expression but close-knit and warm, and of the honest burghess pride of the brave days of old.

We stroll through the shady gateway into the grounds of Rossend Castle. This venerable fortalice has known something in the past of war and court doings. Time and man have latterly dealt with it gently. It has caught the art, not bestowed on all men and castles, of growing old gracefully. From its situation, on the ridge between its two seas, it presides over a desirable little territory of its own. On one side the softened clamour of the port and town comes up to it from the foot of the cliff, and the shining waters of the Firth carry the eye across to the forest of ships' masts in Granton and Leith harbours, with Edinburgh Castle and Arthur Seat rising mistily behind. To the north the ground slopes down steeply towards Seamills Bay and its meadows, and then rises to the comb of land opposite, on which are perched the

houses of the Kirkton and the fragments of St. Adamnan's Church, and behind these to the precipitous sides and wooded scaurs of the Binn, across which, on this day of sun and breeze, shadows are flitting, blurred a little by the smoke from the distillery and the shale works that flank Burntisland's big hill.

Old trees are set about the Castle, and on these a colony of rooks are lazily swinging and cawing, and pigeons flutter about the doors. Ivy mantles warmly the walls of the quadrangular keep, which may date, as the figures near the threshold suggest, from the year 1382. Five hundred years ago, and probably much earlier, it belonged to the Abbey of Dunfermline. It appears to have been a favourite residence of its Abbots, especially those of the ancient Fife family of Durie of that Ilk. At what period the long western wing was built is apparently not known, but probably it was some time before the Reformation and its conversion to purely secular uses; the addition on the northern side is obviously of later date.

We were kindly permitted to have the run of the building, from the cavernous kitchen with its low, vaulted roof and huge fireplace, to the battlements of the tower. It has fallen into good hands, and within as without there has been an endeavour to preserve, as far as possible, the historical features and character of the place. The chief shrine to the

pilgrim of romance is Mary Stuart's bedroom, where Chastelard committed his fatal act of folly.

This Room of State is in the first floor of the keep, and, like the adjoining apartments, is wainscoted in old oak. The secret stair that led Chastelard to his doom has recently been come upon, in carrying out repairs. It opens out of one of the vaulted rooms below, and conducts, not to either of the oratories or recesses let into the immense thickness of the walls of the State Bed-chamber above, but to a spot near the threshold, where there had evidently been a trap-door. Other hiding places, cunningly concealed by panels, open out of the larger room—the banquetting hall or chamber of dais—behind. The Castle is in truth an ideal place for a game of hide-and-seek. The room assigned by tradition as Cromwell's bed-chamber is on the floor overhead; and is fittingly plain and prosaic. No special *locus* is given to the place of concealment of the relics of Saint Margaret—the skull adorned with jewels and still bearing the “flowing auburn hair,” which Abbot Durie had conveyed, first to Edinburgh and then to Burntisland, after the Lords of the Congregation had “keest down” its proper shrine. But surely the little oratory in the ante-room with the antique ribbed ceiling, adjoining the drawing-room, were a fit place for their keeping. They drifted to the Jesuit College

at Douay, and disappeared in the storm of the French Revolution.

Jeems, the gardener, takes us in tow and instructs us in the Castle's chronology and other matters. "It'll be seeven hunner year auld. But I'll let you see something that was afore't"; and he points to a couple of cannons, that may date from the Great French War. "No jist sae auld, ye say? Weel, come awa and I'll show ye the knackiest thing ye ever saw in your lives." He guides us to the "Sea-mill," and explains how the tide, at flow, raises the sluices and fills the great basin behind, and how, with the ebb, the stream finds its way back below the undershot wheel of the flour-mill, until the rising water again chokes it. "That's the haill opera," he muses, peering meditatively down into the gloom, whence rose the skeleton arms of the mill-wheel. "She broke hersel' a twal'month syne. He's laid his parks in gress, and there'll be nae mair grindin' here in God's earth. She's no goin'; but when she goes she's a boy!"

Of this nice derangement of genders we meet another example in Burntisland. At the barber's a customer is in front of the mirror, dabbing at a decapitated pimple, seemingly of old standing. "Ye *hae* planed her down this time," he remarks. "Ay," responds the discouraged artist with the razor, "and efter slippin' owre her sae aften!"

The key of the Parish Church is entrusted to us. The building dates from 1592, and is said to be modelled on the old North Church at Amsterdam. It is a monument of the Dutch intercourse and Dutch sympathies of the Burntisland of three centuries back. The building is four-square, with a ponderous outer stair at the eastern side; and the heavy



Burntisland Parish Church.

polygonal tower rising from the centre is supported on massive arches springing from the corners and forming a prominent feature of the interior. Well might Laud, when he came hither on his mission of Anglicising the Scottish service and church furniture, puzzle his brain vainly as to where he should place the altar. Burntisland Kirk was as refractory to priestly guidance from that quarter as were the Burntislanders of the time. The high and mighty Prince, King James, renewed within it his oath to uphold the Presbyterian form of worship and government, before the Assembly of

1601 ; and broached the pregnant proposal of an authorised translation of the Bible. The movable "desks," fertile source of congregational squabbings ; the votive gifts of ships and the like, hung up in memory of safe and successful voyages to the Baltic or the Arctic Seas, and the "lofts," with the mottoes and insignia of the Trades (all except a trace) have been cleared away. But here by the pillar over against the pulpit is the "seat royal" of the Magistrates, in carved oak and gilt, with the date 1606, a present to the church and burgh from its old enemy and Provost, Sir Robert Melville.

Near the Church door is the tomb of Admiral Fairfax and his wife, parents of Mary Somerville, the astronomer, whose home was on the sea-front opposite the landing-place of the ferry steamers. Dr. Chalmers once lived in Craigholm Terrace, and must often have sat by Oliver's Knoll, on the Lammerlaws, or paced the Links or the Long Sands revolving weighty matters of Kirk and State. Such cares we leave closed in behind the churchyard walls. After the example set by Fergusson in his poetical pilgrimage along these "most unhallowed shores," we "regale with sober can," and passing out of the High Street into the Links by the East Port and Oliver's cannon, sunk muzzle downward into the sod, give our minds for a season to golf.

By the roadside, overlooking the wide stretch of sands running out at low water as far as the Black Rocks, is a lean monument. Above it rises a high steep cliff, clothed on the warmer side by fir and birch trees, and patched on its eastern face by yellow clumps of hardy whin; and on the sky-line overhead is a sheer wall of ruddy basalt. It is the "King's Wud End."

Six hundred and odd years ago, almost to the day, "Alexander, our King," the third of the name, came riding this way on a dark night. He had dined merrily in Edinburgh, although it was Lent, and started, too late for the season and the foul weather, to join his young Queen, married only in the previous summer, who waited for him in the Royal Castle of Kinghorn, barely a mile from this spot. The Lanercost Chronicler tells us that the master of the King's salt work at Inverkeithing, "a married man," using the freedom of the age, chid him for making a night journey in such weather and such darkness, and prayed him to stay the night. But the King laughed, and asked for guides. He was "fey," or "wud." His men and he lost one another, and as he rode round by the shore, his horse sank its feet in the sand, stumbled, and threw him; and "he bade farewell to his kingdom." It was the storm that, according to True Thomas's rede, was to rage from Ross to Solway—that began the

long feud with England, and put back the hands on the dial of Scottish history for two centuries. With this last of our Celtic Kings—

Away wes sone of ale and brede,
Of wyne and wax, of gamyn and glee.

The site of the King's Castle, the dower-house of the Scottish Queens, seems to have been on the "Crying Hill," the highest part of the Rosslands. This, no doubt, is the *Kin-gorm*, the "blue headland,"—a name corrupted from its old Celtic form by ignorance and false analogy—that shelters the snug harbour and sandy bay of Petticur. The foot-track that runs towards it athwart the rocky bank, dipping steeply from the bent-covered braes to the beach, is the "Wallace Path," and may preserve the memory of the Well-house or Spa, celebrated in a treatise written in 1618, by the learned Dr. Patrick Anderson, the King's Physician. The water of this "Colde Spring,"—one or other of the two little streams that tumble out upon the shore—when quaffed "in the morning fasting and at the rock from which it issues,"—was infallible in "relieving such as are troubled with a difficulty of breathing, and allaying all inflammations, internal and external." Of this tippie should the inflamed and panting golfer drink, who in vain urges his ball to mount the hill from the Pump Hole.

The name of the "Crying Hill" contains no allusion to the grief of Queen Yolande. It recalls the already faraway times of the stage-coach and the Ferry Passage. There linger about it echoes of the hoarse shoutings of generations of impatient passengers, eager to cross the Firth to Leith or Newhaven. From the quay-head and from the shelter of the white-washed walls many anxious and fearful glances have been cast into the fog and storm outside, and many a limp and bedraggled traveller has crawled from the rocking ferry-boat to dry land.

A solitary smack lies in the tiny harbour of Petticur; it is the craft that carries supplies to the lighthouse-men and garrison of Inchkeith, three miles off shore. That enterprising knight-errant, James the Fourth, once made Inchkeith the scene of a curious experiment to discover the "original language," sending thither two infants, boy and girl, to be brought up under the care of a dumb woman. "Some say," remarks Pitscottie cautiously, "they spoke good Hebrew; but as to myself, I know not." It is an unsolved problem, like Dr. Johnson's subsequent proposal to turn this bare and wind-swept isle into a vineyard and fruit garden. Inchkeith has, instead, mounted great guns that command the fairways; and the battery above the columnar cliffs of basalt at Kinghorn Ness keeps companion guard on the Fife shore.

Another twist of the Rosslands Road brings us to the burgh. Kinghorn's main street runs its irregular double rank of tiled and slated houses along the brow of the hill to the Cunzie Neuk and the Nethergait, where a cataract of old-fashioned dwellings are spilt down the valley of the little stream towards the Church and the boat-harbour, and spread half-way round the margin of the crescent bay. The green "Braes," with paths descending to the sands and the rocks, complete the amphitheatre; and here Kinghorn comes to look around it and sniff the caller air when time hangs on its hands. This happens not seldom. For though the old Fife town has always found some work to do, this has, for many generations, been of the casual kind. Its age of royal residence—the memories of Alexander's tristful Queen and of Edward Baliol, who landed here in 1332 ("Clinkhorn," Galfrid de Baker's Chronicle calls the place), to be defeated by the Earl of Fife, are too faint and far off to trouble it. Kinghorn has made away with its elder antiquities—with the King's Castle on the Ross; the Glammis Tower on the high ground north of the main street; and St. Leonard's Chapel in the dell of the burn. But the time when it was the Ferry Town, and was stirred into unwonted life by the coming and going of the passage boats, is still within living

memory. There were old inhabitants alive half a century ago who remembered when the town kept sixty saddle horses for the use of travellers, and when not only were the "Lion," the "Three Crowns," and the "New Inn" crowded to the doors, but the whole burgh was turned into a place of entertainment for passengers stayed by tide or storm. And a hundred years ago Kinghorn probably looked back with pride to the classic times sung by Allan Ramsay, when Patie Birnie "fuffed and peched" over the fiddle he had carried with him to Bothwell Brig and back ; and talked with fond regret of high jinks around the old inn table, at which Johnny Stocks the Dwarf assisted by dancing among the punch bowls and claret bottles.

Kinghorn, now that it has closed its spinning-mill, occupies itself a little with shipbuilding, glue, and fishing, but more and more devotes its attention to attracting the golfer and the summer lodger. To this end it has been removing its ancient landmarks. The change, as yet, is visible chiefly around its margin, but is creeping to its centre. Even on the Overgait and the Nethergait an innovating hand is being laid. We miss the old house, with the date 1668, at the head of the steep and winding way, cumbered by forestairs and bait-baskets, which leads from the Town House to the shore. It was once the residence of Robert Bruce of Falkland, the

first patentee for printing the Bible in Scotland. Farther down, under the railway viaduct, is the dwelling built, as the initials, arms, and date



show, by Treasurer Henry Schank, in 1638, a descendant, if legend speaks true, of that Murdoch Schank who was the first to come upon Alexander's body in 1285, and who received for the service the Castlerig, which remains to this day in the possession of the family

16HS ♡ BB38

Coat of Arms, Kinghorn.

and name.

The "Gang" and the "Boat Neuk"—the narrow space between the churchyard wall and the corner in the rocks where the fishing-craft shelter—have from time immemorial been the mart and exchange for the most full-flavoured of Kinghorn gossip. The shipping and fishing fraternities were once a stronger power in the place than they are to-day; and smuggling was not the least profitable of the burgh industries. The Mariners had their loft in the plain and ugly cruciform church over the wall, and at their own charges they erected the monument to their minister, Maister Thomas Biggar, who died in 1605 after leading them "forty years in the desert." Most of the Kinghorn flock and pastors

were staunch to the Kirk when trial and persecution overtook it. The talk on the "Gang" would be worth hearing in those troublous times—especially after that Day of Wrath for the Fife shores, Kilsyth. There were wild women who cursed the preachers and magistrates that had taken away their husbands and sons to fight the Battles of the Lord against Montrose. One, dealt with by the Session, banned the bailie as a "meckle-keited carle," who had made the town full of "faitherless bairns"; and that rhadamanthine court itself had thin sittings "from the paucitie of elders, manie of them being dead and slain at Kilsyth."

Behind the shipbuilding yard, close to the railway line and to the footpath that winds along the shore towards Linktown, is a dingy building, with courtyard in front and high-walled garden behind. Its name preserves, like some half-worn inscription, a record of the transaction by which the lands of an ancient Culdee foundation were secularised for the King's use and converted into an "Abthanrie." To this day the ancient Crown rights are perpetuated, and were her Gracious Majesty to visit Kinghorn, she might claim "free lodging" in Abden House. Sorry entertainment she would find, for this battered old mansion, in which William Nelson, the publisher, spent his early years, has been parcelled out among

many poor tenants ; the oval shot-holes on either side of the door and many of the windows have been built up ; and the once handsome staircase and the rooms in which (according to local belief ; probably it was in an earlier building) Sharp, on his journeys between Edinburgh and St. Andrews, was wont to rest and to dine, on “vyne, flesch, aill, and bread,” have been vilely misused.

The living rock, cropping up at the courtyard entrance, is the same as that trodden aforetime by kings and prelates ; but all else has sadly changed. An ancient mariner volunteers his own memories of the place before it was brought so low. With his staff he indicates panels on which, he declares, he has seen the painted shapes of “prancin’ horses and fechtin’ men” ; they are inch-thick with whitewash and grime. “An’ there’s the subterrawnean passage”—pointing upwards to a connecting bridge between the first floor and the kitchen wing. He it had been who first came upon the buried jar, containing several thousands of silver coins, hidden between Abden House and the sea. They were of “King Dauvit’s time—saxteen hunner year auld.” This would place the date about midway between the Psalmist and the Sair Sanct. In reality the David was David Bruce ; the hoard may have been concealed when Edward Baliol and his English made their descent on Kinghorn.

Exhilarating is the coast walk by the East Braes, over turfy bank, rock, and shingle. The rising tide makes flashes and sparkles in the sunlight as it beats on the off-lying Vows Skerries, tumbles in cataracts over the white limestone ledges that project from below the dark overlying masses of trap, and searches its way with many a rebuff and recoil into the crannies of the boulders on the shore. No longer does the seal frequent the "Bellyfuff" and "Hochmatoch" rocks, as in the time when the Dunfermline monks claimed a sealgh skin out of every seven taken. But the sea is as wonderful a blue; the salt breeze blows as bracingly.

Beyond the target stands forth, on the water's edge, the lonely shape of Seafeld Tower. On this side its walls are breached from base to battlement. Opening on the shore, close by the ledge of red sandstone on which it rises, is a cave, which could tell, among other strange doings, of smuggling exploits, in which the Moultrays of Seafeld, before they were "outed of their fortunes," nearly three centuries ago, did not disdain to bear a hand, in the intervals of feuds with the Kirkcaldys of Grange and other neighbours. Grange-Kirkcaldy is close by; but scarce a vestige remains of the house which was the home of that doughty partisan-soldier who fills so large a place in the story of Mary Stuart's reign,

and where the Great Marquis once came so near being ta'en by his deadly foes. Kirkcaldys and Moultrays, they sleep quietly together in Kinghorn kirkyard, deaf to the voice of the sea and the town talk on the "Gang."

Behoves us to pause a little under the weather-eaten walls of Seafield before venturing farther. Scarce a gunshot off begin the bleachfields and houses of Linktown; and Linktown is Kirkcaldy's knuckle-end.

The "Lang Toon," its thin gray line of closely packed houses over-canopied by smoke, through which prick here and there a spire or a factory stalk, stretches away in front behind its Sands, and, as Pathhead and Sinclairtown, climbs the hill and disappears behind it into space—a town with a beginning but no end. The parks and woods of Dunnikier and Raith give it a green and high background. On one of the nearer heights, behind Abbotshall Church and the valley of the Tiel, is Balwearie—the Wizard's Tower. Sir Michael Scott brought home to it the forbidden knowledge he had gleaned at the schools of Padua and Toledo; and on its battlements the lean old astrologer—does not his acquaintance Dante, who encountered him in the Fourth Pouch of the Eighth Circle of the *Inferno* call him "meagre of flank?"—sat communing with the secret powers of darkness.

He is best remembered around Balwearie and the Linktown for the trick he played the Devil who came to claim the recompense of long service. That must have been a dull-witted member of the infernal hierarchy who was sent to cope with the shrewd Fife Faust ; for he undertook as a last labour to twine a rope out of the sands of Kirkcaldy Bay. Who has waded, like us, through the dry loose mounds behind Linktown break-water must feel sorry for the lubber fiend. He laid him down, wearied of his fruitless toil, and Kirkcaldy, listening pitifully to his moan "My taes are cauld !" has kept adding stone to stone to its length—an allegory, doubtless, of the triumph of human will and persistence over the perverse powers of Nature. "Some say the Deil's dead and buried in Kirkcaldy." Others there are who stoutly deny it to this day.

Linktown's long thoroughfare is sordid, dingy, and mean-looking. There is no elbow-room in its stinted roadway and penurious pavement ; and here and there the corner of a gable pushes out to the very kerbstone and shoulders the passenger into the gutter. The inhabitants, from our sampling, are as frugal of conversation as of street space. Looking in at a little shop, we ask the mistress if she can tell us about the ancient edifice opposite, surmounted by a half-dismounted belfry. "Fine that." "What is it,

please " ?—"A common lodging-house." "Well, what *was* it ?"—"It's Raith's auld jile"; and we are left to ponder over the sententious brevity of Fife information. The building was the lock-up of the Laird's baron-bailie before territorial jurisdiction came to an end and Linktown was incorporated in Kirkcaldy.

Linktown fits into the "Lang Toon" proper as the smaller into the thicker end of a telescope. Kirkcaldy itself may have no great reason to boast of the space and beauty of its High Street. But entering it after what we have passed through is like stepping out of one century into a later and brighter. Towards its landward side the town expands cheerfully to the air and sun. It has broad streets, shaded by trees; rows of well-to-do houses surrounded by gardens; and evidences not a few of taste and leisure joined to wealth and trade. Away to the north-west, too, stretching up towards the Raith woods, there is a fine new park, the gift to the townsfolk of Carlyle's friend, the late Provost Swan, where the inhabitants do disport themselves. But on this lower and older part of the burgh the earlier fashion of building close and treating the sea-breeze as an enemy and intruder still sets its mark. Thus the openings leading to the shore are little better than lanes. One of these wynds is named after Kirkcaldy's most famous son,

Adam Smith, the site of whose birthplace, near the foot of the Kirkgait, is now occupied by a bank.

His father was the local Comptroller of Customs. The vicissitudes of fortune of his native port and burgh must have been a familiar tale to him from his youth up. Its progress from the time its ancient possessors, the Abbots of Dunfermline, whose "Summer pleasaunce" was at Abbotshall, bestowed on it freedom and burghal privileges ; its sufferings in the civil and religious struggles of the seventeenth century ; the growth of its maritime trade, until ruin temporarily fell on it with the Treaty of Union ; the rise of the Path-head nailing industry and the Kirkcaldy linen trade—all these were materials lying ready to his hands from which to evolve the laws that make or mar the Wealth of Nations. A Kirkcaldy legend asserts that Adam Smith, as a child, was stolen by gypsies and carried as far as Kettle. It is curious to speculate what direction the genius that founded modern political economy would have taken had it been diverted to horse-couping and peddling mugs and horn spoons in the fairs and clachans of Fife.

When the Kirkcaldy of an elder day wished to take the air it came forth upon the Sands. Here were held many a Covenanting muster, for preaching or fighting. In calmer times, generations of the citizens have waited on the beach

for the first sight of the whalers or merchant-ships of the burgh coming in from the great deep, or watched the fleets that had lain wind-bound or becalmed in Leith Roads spreading their sails to the favouring breeze for the North Sea. Memories of smuggling days still linger about Kirkcaldy Bay; and the tale is yet told how, when Paul Jones appeared in the offing and threatened a descent, that caustic and pawky clerical humorist, the Rev. Mr. Shirra, knelt down on the Sands and prayed that the Lord would put a hook in the nose of Behemoth and lead him away backward, and how accordingly the privateer-men, taking the red cloaks of the fisherwomen for soldiers assembled to repel their landing, made haste to sheer off.

Two tall and notable shapes—though neither of them native to the scene—chiefly haunt Kirkcaldy beach. Thomas Carlyle and “Trismegistus” Irving—both of them young and with heads and hearts full of things unutterable—used to pace here in summer twilights, and watched each long wave as it came rolling to their feet—“the break of it rushing along like a mane of foam, beautifully sounding and advancing, from the West Burn to Kirkcaldy harbour, the whole mile distance.” Sometimes these two Annandale lads, the dominies of rival schools in the burgh, would rove the neighbouring woods, make

pedestrian excursions to the caves of Wemyss, along the coast to Inverkeithing, or to the summit of the East Lomond, or go on hazardous boat voyages as far as Inchkeith, returning by moonlight. Afterwards they parted company and went out into the world, and the gift of tongues came upon them. But it is doubtful whether either of them knew a happier time than he spent in Kirkcaldy. Carlyle speaks with unwonted geniality of Kirkcaldy society—"a pleasant honest kind of fellow-mortals ; something of quietly fruitful, of good *old Scotch* in their works and ways ; more vernacular, peaceable, fixed, and almost genial in their mode of life, than I had been used to in the Border homeland." He had a kindly remembrance of the fringe of Fife and "its ancient little burghs and sea-villages, with their poor little havens, salt-pans, and weather-beaten bits of Cyclopean breakwaters and rude innocent machineries." It is doubtful whether Kirkcaldy equally appreciated its guests. Irving married a daughter of the manse ; but could make no abiding-place either in the "two rooms in a central wynd," denominated an Academy, or in Abbotshall Schoolhouse. As a preacher he had "owre muckle gran'ner" for this part of Fife. Afterwards, in June 1828, when he had become the great pulpit orator of his time, Kirkcaldy thronged to hear him in the

Parish Church. But it was a day of bitter calamity, for one of the crowded galleries of the building gave way, and some thirty persons were killed.

The tower of their St. Peter's Church, at the head of the Kirkgait, is Kirkcaldy's chief antiquity. Probably it stands on the site of the original "Kirk of the Culdees." It is plain enough in its features, but venerable from the marks of age and hardy struggle with the elements impressed on its gray and massive form. The tall and handsome spire of St. Brycedale's Free Church flouts it from the other side of the road. But this is nothing to the mockery and offence offered to it in the hideous wooden erection serving as a bell-tower, with which it is crowned.

As we take our seats in the train, the porter passes along from carriage to carriage bawling "Kirkcawdy!" for the information of travellers. "Kirkcawdy!" echoes a strident female voice, penetrating through the partition from the next compartment. "That's whaur Henry Irving used to preach." "Henry Irving!" answers another voice of similar *timbre*. "That would be before he took to the play-actin'." Then, after a pause, "I didna ken he was a Stickit Minister."

KIRKCALDY TO LEVEN



KIRKCALDY TO LEVEN

Dysart they call't ; its black and sulphurous caves,
Belch smoke and bellow o'er the neighbouring waves.

George Buchanan.

“It’s open only on Ne’ar’s Day,” is the information given us about Ravensheugh Castle, after climbing up the hill from Kirkcaldy harbour to Pathhead. And so we climb down again to the shore—a far steeper way—through the *heugh* from which, or from its marrow on the eastern side of the craggy peninsula, this stronghold of the lordly line of high St. Clair has taken its name. Seen from the beach below, it looks “a protruding shin bone sticking out of the soil of the dead past,”—as strangely bedded and neighboured as the hulk of some antediluvian mammoth that has been uncovered on the bank of a Siberian stream. The Kirkcaldy houses press up to it on one side ; and the Dysart woods, just coming into leaf, nestle against it on the other. Superimposed on it is a world whose chief thought and

care is linoleum, and beneath are sunlit sands and children playing with the waves—"edged with white," as when Rosabelle dared them, but gentle and placable at this hour—that wash the toes of the great rock.

Ravensheugh, or Ravenscraig, is remarkably intact, after enduring for more than four centuries the buffetings of war and storm. It faces the side of danger—the land—with two tall and strong keeps, one at a higher and the other at a lower level, united by a curtain-wall pierced by a postern gate, and defended by a moat, which cuts the narrow isthmus uniting it to the high ground on which Pathhead is built. Other defences crown portions of the almost sheer cliff overlooking the sea where attack by escalade was to be feared; and altogether, as Captain Dugald Dalgetty would say, it is a very pretty piece of military work for its time. James II. of Scots—"James with the Fiery Face"—formed the design of fortifying this isolated rock; but it was left to his widow, Mary of Gueldres, to carry out his plan. The Castle and lands became, soon after, the compensation given by the Scottish Crown to the St. Clairs of Roslin for resigning into the King's hands their independent Prince-*dom* of the Orkneys, which had been carried into the family by marriage with Rosabelle, the heiress of the old jarls who held their right from the



Ravenscraig Castle.

Kings of Norway. Ravenscraig, which is still, along with Dysart House, in the possession of their descendant and representative, the Earl of Rosslyn, thus commemorates an important incident in the process of welding our islands into one realm.

We make haste to forestall the tide in getting round the shore rocks towards Dysart. "Ye'll hae a gey fecht at the corner," a baiter had warned us; and the "gey fecht" ends in a retreat to dry land. Here is a pretty bit of coast fringed by trees, and with spurs of rock running down into the sea which has hollowed out long lanes through the softer strata, and paved them with sand up to the grassy lips of the woodland—delectable spots for a quiet bathe.

Dysart comes upon us right suddenly. You dive through a low dark archway cut in the rock; and lo! you are on the quay between the outer and the inner harbour, the latter an old "quarry hole," with trees crowning the perpendicular cliff on one side, and the other blocked in by the walls of weather-beaten old dwelling-houses. In this sheltered dock are crowded a dozen squab and bluff-bowed foreign sailing-craft—Dutchmen and Norwegians most of them—discharging props and cement and loading coal. Beyond their masts and rigging, close down upon the shore, is the tower of the deserted Church of St. Serf, ivy-mantled and surmounted by a quaint

saddle-backed and crow-stepped gable; and behind it another group of white-washed walls and red



Dysart Harbour.

roofs seem to be holding colloquy on the beach and to lean over and peer out into the sea.

Hardly is there room for the strings of coal carts to pass on their dusty way—the Via Carbonaria—between the ruined porch and arches of St. Serf's and the retaining wall of the grounds

of Dysart House, inside of which, within a stone-throw of the Church, is the cave, now turned



St. Serf's Tower, Dysart.

into an oratory, where the Saint, who made Dysart his "desert," was so sorely tempted of Satan.

Clambering up from the Harbour Shore into the centre of the burgh, we halt opposite the

Town Hall, whose bell tower might have been lifted bodily from some Dutch Rathaus. One had not to travel farther to learn why Dysart got its name of "Little Holland," or to understand something of the influences which many centuries of neighbourly intercourse with the Low Countries have exercised upon the trade and architecture and customs of this and other old seaports of Fife. Dysart is a well-preserved specimen of the little burghs, tenacious of their ancient traffic and fashions, their faith, and their municipal privileges that line the northern shore of Forth, from Culross to the East Neuk. The "piazzas" have disappeared under which, in Dysart's best days—say about 1617, when its Town Hall was built—the merchants and craftsmen of the place met and chaffered with broad-beamed dealers from Amsterdam or Popperling, bargaining coal and salt, barrels of beer, and cured fish and hides for cart-wheels and delfware, kegs of Holland and pipes of Rhenish ; exchanging also views on Church and State affairs, and mayhap congratulations over the latest victory of the "Protestant Hero" of the Thirty Years' War.

The former "splendours" of the street life and business movement of Dysart have quite disappeared, save in tradition. But many of the older dwellings retain the antique aspect and strong individuality impressed on them in times

earlier than the Union of the Parliaments. There are still rowth of outside stairs, and curiously carved corbels, and projections or recesses under winding staircases or behind capacious fireplaces, betraying the "boleholes" where many a prize of tobacco, spirits, or silk was stored away from the eyes of the gauger. The old brewhouses, gardens, and cellars, like the caves and clefts by the seashore, might also tell their tales of lawless meetings and of refugees from justice or tyranny, going back to and beyond the time when the "canty carles of Dysart," including thirty skippers of the port, fought under the blue blanket of the Covenant, until, on the field of Kilsyth, they were "a' wede away."

Casting a backward glance at Dysart and its memories as we follow the shore by the "Piper's Braes" towards the Red Rocks, and leap the cataract of reeking hot water that tumbles down to the beach from the colliery works above, it seems to us that there has always been about it a sniff of sulphur—a reminder of the thin partition between it and the fires of Tophet. Is it not preserved in the local nomenclature; for instance in the "Hell Pot Wynd," which recalls one of the many occasions on which the coal seams have caught fire and burned with a fierceness and dourness like that with which the Fife folks of old flung themselves into any work, good or

evil? By this way Michael Scott may have come to keep tryst with his neighbour the Laird of the Wemyss, concerning the defence of the Kingdom and the bringing back of the "Maiden" who, to Scotland's dule, died, from the rough handling of the North Sea, on reaching the Orkneys. At these fantastic red crags at Blair Point, the Witches of the Wemyss met at midnight and worked their spells for raising the wind ; at least here the godly made a bonfire of them for the encouragement of others. The Vicar of Dysart is believed to have hunted and caught Walter Mill, the proto-martyr, on the Piper's Braes ; and this rough beach was the skirmishing ground between the French troops, landed at the harbour by Mary of Guise, and the Lords of the Congregation, whose men "laye in their claithes, their boits never aff," for three weeks, "skirmishing almost every daye, yea sum dayes even from morne to nicht." And later, when the quarrel ran as hot, or hotter, between Presbyter and Prelatic, the recalcitrant Synod of Fife, locked out of St. Serf's Church by order of James VI., met by the seashore and carried on their polemic for two hours "in spite of drenching rain and the King's authority"; and Oliver's panic-stricken troopers no doubt fled thither when a thunderbolt struck the Town Hall in which they were lodged.

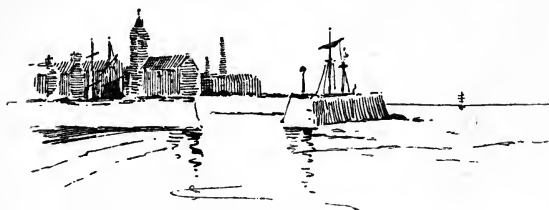
In a niche of the Red Rocks a local weaver of

forty years since has hewn a memorial of himself, in the shape of a figure, in relief, of the "Prisoner of Chillon," chained to a huge ring and staple in his dungeon wall and raising clasped hands in agonised appeal against his fate—a work of patience rather than of art. West Wemyss—a little group of masts and chimneys—now peeps at us round its corner and through its smoke. The "Lock-out Road" bends gently round towards it, following the curve of the shore and of the wooded hills behind. These are turning to purple and green under the breath of spring. The spring colours are everywhere—green on the grass and trees ; white, like snow, sprinkled on the spikes of the blackthorn or heaped in drifts on the branches of the wild cherry trees ; yellow on the bunting's breast, the willow catkins, and the primroses edging the path.

The land here and now is as fresh and glad-some as the sea ; and we have to leave it to plunge into stour and racket and evil smells. But first there is a pretty peep, at the Chapel Garden, of a white cottage and a trim pleasance enclosing a fragment of gray ruin of half ecclesiastical, half manorial aspect, with a wonderfully weather-eaten gable end turned towards the sea—an ancient church which has somehow lost its history, at least in local memory.

While we stop to take into our minds and

notebooks this picturesque approach to West Wemyss—the lofty cliffs veined with piping, the brick stalks rising through the trees, the colliery gangways and workings below, the little harbour at the point, and beyond it the perspective of the village street, closed by the quaint lean narrow-windowed steeple of the Town House—a faint boom sounds across the water, and a group of



West Wemyss.

grimy pitmen turn round to tell us that it is the Edinburgh gun. “Do you know Barncraig?” we venture to ask. But they all shake their heads. “It’s the auld pit; it was closed lang before oor time.”

They can tell us plenty about the pits still at work and discharging their laden trucks into daylight upon the crowded harbour pier. Past these we must pick our way along narrow platforms, among tramway rails and points, with crags and pithead machinery overhead, and the thud of the engines mingling with the splash of the waves against the wooden piles underneath.

Few of the inhabitants of the dingy little barony burgh are about as we saunter through its single street. Town and townsfolk look commonplace and woebegone to the casual eye. The lean Dutch steeple invading the thoroughfare, and squinting suspiciously up and down the street through the narrow slits of windows set under a penthouse of zinc, seems the one outstanding object in the place. Houses and people wear in their faces that peppery-gray look which the "Chronicles of Barncraig" tells us comes from an impregnation of coal dust. After all, how little the passer-by can guess of the volumes of human history, both tragedy and comedy, hidden behind the surface he sees! They are to be read only by one who sits down and patiently studies them, and who brings to the task something of the poet's sympathy and power of divination. Thus, while we tentatively identify the "Cox'l" and the "Poun's," the Windy Wynd, the How Head and the Hine, and fancy we catch a glimpse of Sandie Fernie's mahogany-tinted features near the harbour, there are none of the faces peering through the panes that can be taken for those of the Linty or Cobbler Swankey, and no figure near the well or the store door that fits the story of Auld Ailie.

Out again upon an iron shore, where, below high-water mark, beside weed-draped rocks and

barnacled fragments of wreck, there gushes up through the stones a strong stream of fresh water—like a spring of happy memories among dead hopes. Wemyss Castle is on the wooded cliff overhead. It thrusts its plain white western wing through its trees, and flaunts its flag against the blue sky. As we move round opposite the front and the older eastern flank of the Castle, its aspect changes. It becomes imposing and stately—a lordly “Castle by the Sea,” that has the history of good and evil times plainly written on its strong and frowning walls, its corbelled turrets, and machicolated string courses. Macduff was the earliest recorded “Lord of the Caves,” and its later owners claim to be his descendants. Here might have been the hold of the Thane of Fife, although there are many rival sites—a “Macduff’s Castle,” only a mile to the eastward; another, at Kennoway, two or three miles inland. At least there has been a Wemyss of Wemyss for six hundred years and more. For witness, is there not the silver basin, given as a drinking bowl by Eric of Norway to the “noble Scot” who came to convey home the King’s daughter, and now turned to the pious use of a family baptismal font?

No emissary of the Psychological Research Society has yet questioned “Green Jean,” the unquiet spirit that is said to flit through the darkling

Castle chambers, and extracted from her her forgotten story. But the tale of Mary Stuart's first meeting here with her young cousin Darnley is well remembered, and, to us that know its context, is sadder and stranger than any ghost legend. The Queen was light of heart, hunting, hawking, and in the evening dancing, when Darnley, a proper young man and tall, came riding thither out of England. The "lang lad," who, as Melvill tells us, was "even and brent up, weill instructed in his youth in all honest and comely exercises," took his sovereign's eye, when she met him in the presence chamber, now reduced to the steward's room, opening from the old court. There were great feastings at Wemyss, then in the hands of the Queen's half-brother, Moray ; and the Caleb Balderstones of the lairds and lords of Fife, who entertained the royal train on their progress, long remembered their visits, for "there was such superfluity of banqueting as was never seen before within this realm, which caused the wild fowl to be so dear that partridges were sold at a crown apiece." The woods and the green links by the shore might tell of softer passages in that time of short-lived hope, when love was young and Darnley kind. The "lang lad" carried all his good qualities on his outside ; and the match so hastily made was repented all too soon.

Tradition says that Mary could wield a golf club as well as fly a hawk and foot a measure, but it does not add that she played a match with her young kinsman and suitor over the Wemyss Castle links. Like her father, James V., when he was in peril with the gipsies in one of the caves near by, or like her great grandson Charles II., who paid two flying visits, as an exiled Prince, to Wemyss, she had other things to distract her mind. Yet all three might have found type and warning of their own fortunes in this errant and adventurous course. It is full of surprises and misfortunes for the rash and unwary. Narrow and besprent with hazards is the territory between the impending hill and that grave of hopes, the shore ; and you may play over a pinnacle of red rock and "hole out" at the mouth of a cavern. We, too, like Dogberry and the Royal Stuarts, have our losses. Only one instance do we know of a visitor to the links of Wemyss who never lost a ball. It is that of a friend who trained his dog to hunt the dodging gutta downwind.

The nearest and grandest of the Wemyss Caves opens its hospitable portals to receive us. Three stupendous archways face east, west, and south, like the fragment of some cyclopean cloister ; and, within, the roof rises dome-wise to a height of a hundred feet, and has been pierced by a shaft. This is the "Glasswork Cave" ;

and in it may be said to have begun that manufacture of bottle and window glass in which Scotland strove, but long in vain, to rival the work of the French craftsmen driven over to the neighbouring kingdom by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Ages before, this and the other Wemyss caves must have been the homes of troglodyte natives of the Fife shores, who have left their strange Pictish symbols and figures of man and beast sculptured high on the walls—a lettering that gives only dubious answers to the questions of the archæologist.

We are not so lucky as a visitor to this cave a generation ago, who found “under its cool shade the cows of the two neighbouring villages assembled ; by and by the village maidens came to milk them. Here and there long lines of sunbeams, bursting into the gloom through the lofty archways, lighted up a singular scene of beauty.” But although we miss the cows and the village maidens, there are the shafts of sunlight, barring the shadows of the cave, and, without, the vivid green of the meadows, the vivid red of the rocks, the pale-blue sky, and the turquoise-blue sea.

East Wemyss is a snug, cleanly, white-washed village, with orchard trees well sprinkled among the houses, rising woods and fields behind it, and a fine rocky shore in front. It looks a delightful place for a quiet holiday—for a little golf, a little

bathing, perhaps a little sketching, and a great



Court Cave, Wemyss.

deal of restful enjoyment of the changeful charms

of sea and shore. We would fain linger and know more thoroughly this Sleepy Hollow, but must not. An ancient doocot, picturesquely perched on the spur of coast, points our eastward way. Behind it is a beautifully situated cemetery climbing a hill and descending a dell to the sea, a strange contrast to some of the old churchyards we have passed. Below it is a spacious cave, through the two doorways of which this wonderful shore-walk is threaded. It is the Court Cave, where the courts of barony were held in elder times—where the Guidman of Ballangeich found lodging with the gipsies. *Macdonald's* Hold—its twin towers battered out of shape by time, which has left it a name but no history to speak of—surmounts the cliff in front, and beneath it, fringing a new stretch of links, are more caves. These also have their uncouth tracings of shapes of snake, mammoth, and dragon ; cross, circle, and horse-shoe ; their paved floors ; their seats hewn in the living rock. But the entrances are low ; and the interiors—even that of the capacious Doo Cave, which is lighted from the pigeon-holes high up the cliff—are dark and noisome.

Who would potter and peer in a hole in the earth, with the sun-glint on the links and a making tide creaming the tawny curve of Buckhaven Bay ? The ribs of many a gallant boat protrude from these sands. It is a cemetery of wrecked and

worn-out fishing craft, as full of memories for the sunburned toilers of the sea who live on the cliff above as is the churchyard itself. A crooked way leads down to the harbour at the point, where a few grizzled salts are seated on fish-boxes and piles of spars watching a crew hoisting with musical cries their brown-tanned sail to a freshening wind outside the bar. On the high ground in rear there is the semblance of a street. But elsewhere there is no more order about the Buckhyne houses than about seabirds' nests on a shore cliff. They cling to the rock like barnacles. To follow the coast is to wind in and out among narrow passages, terraces, and flights of steps, all rendering upon the salt water which runs up between the long reefs under the doors and windows of the fisherfolk.

Everywhere you turn the way is encumbered by creels and lobster-baskets and coils of baited lines—the out-look blocked by festoons of brown white-lettered bladders. Oilskins and sou'westers and drying fish hang on both sides of the lintels ; and on the steps are sonsy fisherwomen shelling clams, baiting lines, and mending nets.

A wild spot this in a south-easterly gale ! Small wonder if the faces of the Buckhaven folk be constantly turned seaward, and if their thoughts and talk be pickled in ocean brine. The sea is their familiar neighbour, their great benefactor, their

ruthless enemy. Its changeful voice is the undertone of their whole lives—their lullaby and their dirge. They are a peculiar people, the descendants, it is said, of a colony of Brabanters who settled during Alva's persecution on this western horn of Largo Bay. A douce and sober folk they look, in their sad-coloured raiment. But no more bold and skilful fishers lie at the lines on the North Sea or follow the Herring Draive round the coast. Surnames are as frugally distributed among them as are ideas; and when you have mentioned the Thomsons and Robertsons you have well-nigh exhausted the village. According to fisher custom, identification is helped out by "tee" or "slug" names. But they must be cautiously used. Once, says a Buckhaven legend, two fishermen met at the braehead, and exchanged a friendly weather greeting. "Windy, Willie!" said one. "Terrible, Tammy!" replied the other. Inadvertently each had spoken his neighbour's nickname, and they fell on one another tooth and nail.

"Sawney, Jock, and Janetty" are much in evidence on the stairs and at the nooks of the lanes. Indeed we have heard Buckhyne tersely summed up as "Shells, smells, and bairns." These last, like Fife bairns in general, are not blate. One sturdy urchin brusquely accosts the artist, while he is washing in a bit in water-colour with

the sands as foreground—"Will ye pent my boat?" "Bring it here then, laddie," says the sketcher good-naturedly, thinking of toy craft. "She's doon in the hyne; I'll sune row her roun'," is the prompt response. Such is the leaer gotten in Buckhaven College.

Methil is the neighbour of Buckhaven to the east. Prosperity has come to it from time to time like a tidal wave, and left it again stranded high and dry. But yesterday it was a deserted and tumbledown village, living on the memory of the days before its upsetting neighbour Leven had been heard of, when it was a busy and thriving place, with salt-pans and windmills and a shipping trade. To-day it is again at the top of the flow. It is the chief port of shipment of the Fife coal-field. Large steamers come into its capacious docks and load under the great coal shoots; acres of ground are covered with railway sidings and stores; and houses sprout up like mushrooms.

Alas, for the mellow impasto which time had begun to spread over Old Methil! A black smear is over it all. Coal-bings are heaped high on the classical links of Dubbieside, on which great feats were done by the ancient champions of golf. There is still a strip of turf set aside for the game on the slope of the Kinarchie Braes. But the glory has long fled across the Leven and

the Scoonie burn. Before even coal-dust and sand-drift had laid waste the scene, the better had proved the enemy of the good—Lundin had vanquished Dubbieside.

Methil's ghost—Thrummy Cap—has likewise deserted the scene. It was the spirit of a Dutch wood-contractor who failed during his lifetime in his efforts to get his account squared with the laird. So, with a dogged persistency worthy of Vanderdecken himself, he came back from the dead to present again and again his little bill. There may be a statute of limitations to such debts in the spirit-world. But it is more probable that the poor spook, disturbed by the unwonted clatter and stir, has *forhooyed* the old red house, shaped like a two-decker, that stands at the harbour end.

Dubbieside scorns its homely name, and calls itself Inverleven. You may listen in vain for the click of the weaver's shuttle as you take your way through the dingy main street that leads to the waterside. As well look for the silver scales of the salmon in the stream that flows hither, laden with the scum of bleach-fields and paper-mills, from Loch Leven. Salmon and hand-loom weaving belong, like the Danes who fought their battles on Leven banks, to the unrestorable past. Leven town, a pleasant modern fact, makes a brave show from the opposite bank.

Its harbour is silted up ; a port of refuge for water-logged fishing boats, towed here out of the strife of winds and waves, to end their days in calm waters and sink and drown decently in their own element.

Happily Leven is not dependent on its trade. It has a mine of wealth in its links and sands. Its fortune is in the fresh breezes that play upon its bent-hills and in the lovely sweep of Largo Bay, reaching in towards the base of the smooth green Law and stretching away to where the headland of Kincraig Point fronts the white cliffs of the Bass. When, in the Golden Age of Golf, a village wakens up to find itself planted on the skirts of a playground like Leven Links, it may wash its hands of coal and ochre and other sordid business stains, and cheerfully devote itself to ministering to the pleasure and healthful exercise of its guests and frequenters. Its past history, if it has any, it can afford to forget ; in the present there is enough to satisfy the soul of every reasonable man. And so it comes that few of the residents of Leven, and scarce any of its visitors, could pass an examination in the troublous Kirk history of Scoonie Parish ; that the Town Cross—the fragments recovered from an old wall and put together behind an Institute—is passed by with an idle glance ; and that the multitudes who disport themselves on the sands

neither know nor care to know that Charles II. came hither from Wemyss in holiday humour to "ride at the glove," before setting out on a vainer errand for Worcester.

As we move eastward, the close-built streets that converge on the harbour fray out into lines of pleasant villas and cottages, flanked and backed by gardens. The human heart also expands to the genial influences of the air and sun ; and before we reach the teeing-ground the spirit of Golf enters and takes possession. By the Scoonie Burn—the yellow Pactolus of these Elysian Fields—wanders their guardian genius, "Robert," and to his mild challenge : "Ye'll hae a ticket, nae doot?" the conventional tribute must be paid before one may pass over and follow the gutta ball in its devious and adventurous flight. In the billowy folds of this Enchanted Ground lurk calamity and disappointment — bunkers where the timid and the rash are alike entrapped, evil "lies" and scrapes that turn confidence into despair, and dread places, such as the Stygian stream of pit-water that is moat to the rampart of the Mile Dyke, or that meandering Cocytus beyond,—*"Piggy's Burn,"*—above which curses muttered over lost balls and bungled shots seem to hover perpetually.

This is a region thick set with gins and traps and snares—a place where surprise, mischance,

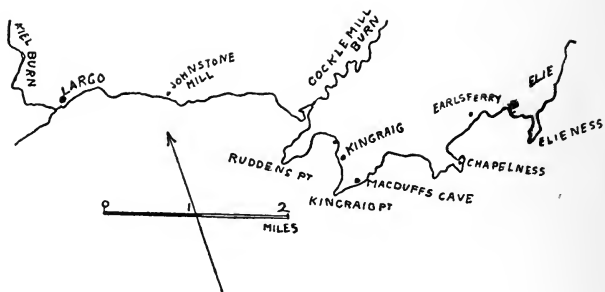
and mysterious disappearance have happed immemorially. One remembers that three centuries ago a laird of Leven Links—that great lawyer and collector of Decisions, Gibson of Durie—was caught up bodily by a band of mosstroopers while taking his exercise on the fringes of Fife, and buried for weeks from human ken in a Border peel tower until a law plea had been decided in his absence. This was worse even than “tynin’ a ba’.”

At length that bane of golfers, the railway line, draws to the sea, or the shore bends towards the railway, and in front the bent hills rise impending. The half-course is finished, and we climb a green barrier to find the Firth dimpling and sparkling at our feet. Here one can rest and draw pure full draughts of life. Surely nowhere does the water have so marvellous a play of colour, or break in such showers of light on rock and sand. While a red-coated golfer turns his face westward, shading his eyes with his hand against the level sun, lest peradventure his ball go astray and be lost in sandy places, our gaze is out to sea, where a fisher boat is steering for home. There also is our haven of rest, and we make for it over tussocky sand-hills which the truant feet of Alexander Selkirk must have known full well, long before they paced sentry on the desolate rock of the South Sea. Smooth is the

path of the waters ; the brown sail is lowered off Lundie Ledge, and the boatie rows in before us, and, while we are still steering through the scattered cottages of Drumochy, is moored already by the little pier. A handful of houses cluster at the foot of the hill, the biggest of them giving bield from the east wind to the tiny harbour. A glen opens into the land, and over it, and over houses and fishing-boats, straddles an ugly railway viaduct. Farther back it curves in green folds ; glints of red roofs against a background of wood tell the whereabouts of the Kirkton and Lundin Mill ; and over all is the cloven head of the Law.

This is Lower Largo.

LARGO TO ELIE



LARGO TO ELIE

I cuist my lines in Largo Bay.

The Boatie Rows.

WE cast our lines by Largo Bay ; and they fall
on pleasant places. Says the brisk old Fife stave—

Up wi' the canty carles o' Dysart,
And the merry lads o' Buckhaven,
And the saucy limmers o' Largo,
And the bonnie lasses o' Leven.
Hey ! ca' thro', ca' thro' !
For we hae mickle ado.

And mickle ado have we to tear ourselves from
moorings, and ca' thro' a stage which is to
bring us to Elie or Pittenweem. For when
limmers o' Largo wile you to the Ladies Links,
to the gaunt shapes of the Three Stones that
stand near the ruined Tower of Lundin like
withered beldames turned to rock while about
some deed without a name, or to the moss-fringed
well of Lundin Mill, where the patriarch of trout
no longer lurks, time speeds, ah, too quickly !

Or you may be enticed from the forthright track to follow the shady mazes of the Serpentine Walk, and this will bring you past the lodge of Largo House, to the hamlet, the hospital, and the kirk of Upper Largo—the “Kirkton”—seated on the knees of the Law. In an older Largo House, of which a fragment is still standing, dwelt that stout and bold sailor Sir Andrew Wood, when his last sea-fight had been fought, and his ships, the *Mayflower* and the *Yellow Caravel*, no longer needed to cruise the Forth, keeping a keen look-out for Stephen Bull and the English pirates rounding the Bass. Traces are yet to be seen of the canal which the old sea-dog caused to be dug, that he might be rowed in state to church in his eight-oared barge. It was a later laird of Largo—one of the Durhams—who, according to Mr. Wood’s *East Neuk of Fife*, first christened Edinburgh “Auld Reekie,” and timed his household prayers by its rising smoke—“It’s time, bairns, to tak’ the buiks, and gang to bed ; for yonder’s Auld Reekie puttin’ on her nichtcap.”

You may even be drawn on to explore the depths of Kiel’s Den, and there, belike, glimpse some ghost of the past flitting through the greenwood. It may be that forgotten Viking—the Tammie Norrie of local folklore—who sleeps under the mound of Norrie’s Law, and whose

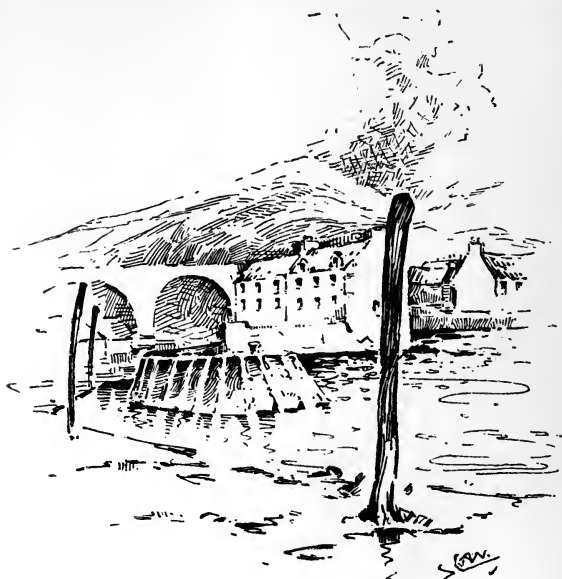
sword and *byrnie* of silver mail were pilfered from him by some ferreting cadger. Or that bluff and faithful Lord Lindsay, owner once of the battered crow's nest of Pitcruvie Castle, who stood up and to his face reproved James the Fourth for his unfilial conduct at Sauchie. It is still more like to be the wandering spook of Largo's "Robinson Crusoe." Fortune drifted him back and cast him ashore at his native village. But he found that even Largo society irked him, and stole away to Kiel's Den to hunt for that spirit of solitude that had been his familiar in the rocky recesses of Juan Fernandez.

Down by the harbour and the shore one has a yet better chance of forgathering with memories of Alexander Selkirk. The full tide laps gently against the pier, the traditional mart of business and exchange of news of the village. The sea, a good familiar creature, plays round the bases of the old warehouse, now the snug "Crusoe Inn," and the other houses by the water's edge, and croons softly the eerie song that fills those who listen to it with the mad passion for wandering. Here,—

Among the waste and lumber of the shore,
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing nets,
Anchors of rusty fluke and boats up-drawn,—

Selkirk spent his days as a youngster. And

here, after he had sailed with Dampier and seen many strange lands and faces, he sat with his cronies and told over again that wondrous ancient



Largo Harbour.

mariner's tale that on his way home he had poured into the ears of Defoe, who had stumbled on him at Wapping. Perhaps he was little better than a returned beach-comber and ne'er-do-weel. Boy and man he was very different from the exemplary hero of the Sunday School prize-book.

In his youth he had "thrawed his mouth" at the minister, and was in the Session's black-books, and a South Sea training in the beginning of last century was not the choicest moral discipline. But much more than was ever laid to the charge of Alexander Selkirk will be forgiven to the marooned Largo sailor whose story inspired the great latter-day legend of the English-speaking race, and has kindled in the breasts of generations of lads the love of manly adventure, and strengthened in them the will "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." One likes him for coming back to the old village at the mouth of the Kiel burn, and for buying the old house that his father might end his days in it in comfort. It has been removed—more's the pity!—and his great sea-chest and musket and cocoa-nut drinking-vessel have drifted elsewhere. But an inscription on a new building on the left-hand side of the road, as you go through the part of the village lying east of the burn—known of yore as the "Temple of Strathairly"—marks the place; and in front of it is a statue of the unshorn and stalwart castaway—"the shipwrecked sailor waiting for a sail"—clad in goat-skins, and peering out to sea under his hollowed palm for sight of the long-delayed rescue.

In vain; for Largo has been discovered by the wandering race of summer visitors, and their

many-storied caravanserais begin to block out Crusoe's birthplace from the shore. Already the tawny beach is strewn with sprawling youngsters, busy, at this hour of high tide, investing the positions of their nurses and guardians with moat and fortification, or launching their frail craft on a benign sea that meets the land with barely a ripple, and only hints, by a timber sticking up through the loose sand, of its angry and hungry moods.

The village is behind us ; and we tread "the bent sae brown." Nowhere by the shores of Fife, unless it be in the wilds of Tent's Muir, is there so desert and solitary a place as this waste, known of old as Drumeldrie Links, that borders the eastern recesses of Largo Bay. It is a wild given over to windlestrae and thistle, with here and there a boulder, dropped on the flat and sandy sea-floor far back in the Ice Age. A firm and springy pathway wanders among the round-headed hillocks of blown sand, thinly thatched by the bleached and dishevelled bent ; and in the sunnier spots are blotches of purple thyme and the tiny yellow stars of the tormentil. The creaking cry and plunging flight of the peewit seem to haunt this empty place. But if you lift up your voice and shout, a great flock of gulls will rise and circle round towards the sea, and scores of rabbits will scurry into their holes ;

or perhaps a velvet-coated mole will start up at your foot and begin digging a cave of refuge in the loose earth for dear life.

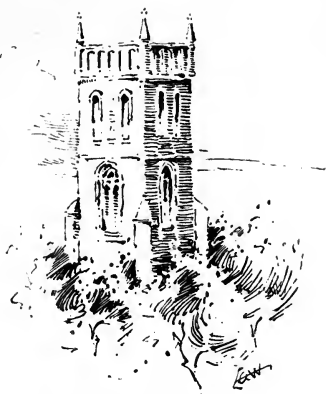
And so we come to where the Cocklemill burn meanders through the sandy solitude, exposing high banks, honeycombed with martins' nests, and losing itself in a tidal marsh between us and the long spur of Ruddon Ness. To wade or to jump is a dread alternative for such as have been endowed by nature with short legs. We drag a floundering figure from the slough of despond, and wipe the Cocklemill mud from its nether limbs before wending onward, round the beautiful white crescent of Shell Bay, and up the narrow pathway, between the cultivated land and the sea cliffs, to the summit of Kincaig Head.

In clear weather the head of Kincaig Braes must be a glorious vantage-ground for surveying Fife and the coasts thereof. The precipices of black trap and basalt drop almost sheer into the sea, two hundred feet below, and at their feet are strewn sharp and jagged fragments of rock like rows of shark's teeth. A terrible turmoil must be here when the wind blows hard out of the south-east, and the waters are lashed against these frowning bastions. To-day you can look down into their clear, calm, green depths. But a moist breath from the North Sea has begun to fill the Firth, and through it looking seaward you can

barely discern the Bass and Berwick Law looming up like a pair of huge and spectral pyramids.

On the land side the ground slopes smoothly down to the bed of the burn, and then rises again to the high ridge which, near at hand, is flanked to left and right by the heights of Largo Law and Kellie Law. Close beside us on the braeface is the substantial old house of Kinraig, with its dilapidated doocot—a manor, now turned into a farmhouse, which has been in the possession of the Gourlays since the days of William the Lion. The gaunt walls and chimneys of the burned Grange are also near at hand. By it passes the ancient “Cadger’s Road,” from the landing-place of the Earl’s Ferry, where so many have stepped ashore since St. Cuthbert’s time to pass on and make history in Fife. The Earl of Mar was one of these ; and the Jacobite lairds of the Kingdom convened in the house of Malcolm of Grange to hatch the rebellion of ’15. The old road ascends by Rires, on the crest of the ridge exactly opposite us, making towards Falkland. We can trace its way past many a spot famous in history and romance. The fine tower of Kilconquhar Church rises above the trees that screen the village and loch ; it was an heiress of Kilconquhar—“Kinneuchar” in every Fife ear—that the Bruce made his bride. Balcarres Craig and Balcarres House, the home of the Lindsays, whose

family history is one long chapter of romance, are fair in sight. In the herd's cottage on the hill behind lived "Auld Robin Gray," and the song that has drawn so many tears was written by a blyth daughter of the Licht Lindsays, sitting at the little turret window facing Kinraig and the sea.



Kilconquhar Church.

Then, overlooking the Craig itself, is the site of the Castle of Rires; and there, if ever there was a Macduff (which historians doubt), dwelt the Thane of Fife. One must not doubt while seated on Kinraig Braes. For in the face of the rock below is not the cave to be seen where he found shelter from the usurper? And while his wife held politic parley at his *rath*, three or four miles distant, with Macbeth, did he not take flight from Earlsferry; and did he not in gratitude confer on that ancient burgh a share of those "privileges of Clan Macduff," which he had asked of his rightful king when he had brought him to his own, namely, that no boat should put off from shore in pursuit of a fleeing homicide until

the escaping sail was half way across the Firth?

Elie Links sweeps round the back of the town and comes down to the sea-margin between Earlsferry Point and the foot of the bluff of Kincaig. The putting-greens, from our height, show on it like tiny little discs of lighter verdure on which mannikins are going through mystic evolutions. Nor, when we have come down "by the run" to the plane on which they move, do they seem less intent on their game. Your golfer of the earnest type would not allow himself to be put off his game although Behemoth were to bellow at him from behind the "Coal Baikie."

On the Chapel Ness or Point of Earlsferry there is another green and quiet spot for meditation. Between us and the huge old granary on Elie Ness the sandy bay curves like a sickle, and behind it in a continuous line—for the two little burghs have grown into one—is the cheerful and thriving-looking seafront of Elie and Earlsferry. Fashion has discovered the place; but at no time does it surge tumultuously around this bold green headland, set apart, "of old past the memory of man," to the solace of weary and storm-tossed travellers. The foundations of the ancient chapel, attached to the Hospital which stood here under the pious care of the Nuns of North Berwick, are still above ground, and behind the

eastern gable wall shelter is to be found when the winds buffet the Ness too rudely.

Embarkings and disembarkings many, besides those of which there has already been mention, have been witnessed from the Chapel Ness, since Macduff was ferried hence to the "land beyond the sea." Off the Vows beacon King David Bruce and Margaret Logie were in such dire distress of shipwreck that they vowed to build a church to St. Monan as the price of safety. From hence, too, the Duke of York's coxswain stole away with the Belle of Elie "coopered up in a barrel with a head of open spars"; and "Old Borlum" and his Highlanders of the '15, after nailing to a tree the ear of the Laird of Elie's groom, as a "sour Whig," slipped by night through the line of watchful frigates to land at Jova's Neuk, under the brow of Gullane Hill opposite, and make their bold dash at Edinburgh. "The Elie" was always a haven of refuge; but perhaps none ever appreciated its welcome and shelter more than good Master James Melville, who sets down in his "Diary," under the year 1580, the particulars of the "maist pitiful and lamentable" voyage he made thither from North Berwick in "a mickle coal boat." For shipping unadvisedly, with "but ane auld man and twa young boys," and as passengers "a boy, the nurse, and an Englishwoman, a soldier's wife in Berwick

wha had a desire to come with the bairn into Scotland," the "little pirrhe of east wind" with which they set out died away, and night came down on a tumbling and yawing boat and a sick boat's company, until "at last the Lord looked mercifully on, and sent, about the sun going to, a thick haar from the south-east, sae that getting on the sail that was upon her, within an hour an a half, nae wind blowing, we arrivit at the Ailie ; and after a maist wearisome and sair day, gat a comfortable night's lodging with a godly ladie at Carmury."

Earlsferry and Elie folks are never left to sigh long in vain for a "pirrhe of wind" from the East or some other quarter. The air and the sea around them are in constant motion. The waves seem to dance more buoyantly than elsewhere about the Vows Rocks and the Heads. The sands of the bay are a very playground for the breezes. Between the common and the sea the clean and handsome houses are sprinkled—a long but thin array. There is plenty of space for the briny, fragrant breath from the open mouth of the Forth, or the gentler airs from landward, to sift freely through from beach to links and links to beach, and keep the streets constantly sweet and fresh. And from the grass to the sands and back again move the frequenters of the place, as suits the hour or the weather, the

whim of the moment or the will of the wind. They do but frugally use the little main street of Earlsferry that meanders through the burgh, for half of the time under orchard walls and overhung by trees.

But quiet as is this western end of Elie Bay, the aroma of the past has almost all exhaled from it. The eye does not fall upon a house that would fitly lodge a fugitive homicide or smuggler or a roystering royalist of other days; such tenants would take ill with the presence of the summer visitors. The excellent historian of the "East Neuk," of whom the red-steeped Free Kirk further East is a conspicuous memorial, was able to recover a hazy reminiscence of the old-fashioned look of the "Torret House," and of a bed, with satin hangings, "apple-green and a darker shade of the same colour," which legend had it was that slept in by the Duke of York, when he was wont to cross over from Leith to The Elie to solace himself with golf and the company of the Fife lairds, before fate had called him south to be the last of the Stuart Kings.

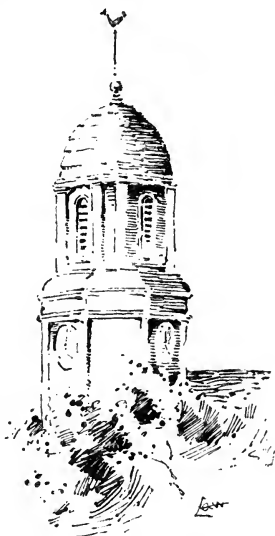
These were among the last scraps of old romance that clung to the twin burghs. The tide of change has taken them with it and drifted them into the front of the fashion among Fife watering-places. In Sibbald's time the elder of them was a "little fisher town." It had washed

its hands of fish before stretching them out to join those of its younger and more enterprising neighbour, Elie. Beside that spruce and well-busked place Earlsferry still wears a sedate elderly-sister air. But it is old-fashioned only by comparison. The few remaining cottages of earlier date are being elbowed into the background; spick and span new villas thrust in between them and the roadway. A remnant of the Fife dwelling-houses of the elder type have closed their ranks and rallied around the ancient Town House steeple. But even these confess, by the bugging out of a bow-window or the cutting away of a forestair, that although they may have a foot in the past they have an eye on the present. The steeple itself has been redd up, and is jauntily rigged out with a Jubilee clock.

When we penetrate into Elie the presence of the invader and the ravages of prosperity proclaim themselves yet more plainly. On the terraces of the new hotel impending over the roadway, guests in knickers and blazers are smoking and talking golf. A family party accost us and, in a tongue on which Glasgow is writ large, inquire the way to the railway station. A bevy of damsels, in killing costumes, issue forth to post letters on the way to the steamboat pier on the Apple Rock. Following in the wake of these, we find the Toll Green become a trim and pretty *alameda*, planted

with trees ; at the Toft not even a fish-creel lingers to lend the spot a savour of old times ; the approaches to the East Links are pervaded by the perambulating nursery-maid. Hunting after the spirit of an Elie that has gone, we enter the churchyard. Here, too, things have been swept and garnished. There is no longer any of the admired disorder of head and table stones with half-obliterated epitaphs, half-buried in the long grass. Still there are slabs with lettering and emblems two centuries old, and the fabric of the Parish Church itself, with its later but quainter spire, built by a Sir John Anstruther at his own expense, reminds us that the burgh is not of yesterday.

What would "auld Maggie Wud o' the Ailie"—she who "likit a' things weel but good things best"—have said to it all? Probably, as the local exponent of the philosophy of being pleased with things as you find them, she would have rejoiced in the transformation. This at least is the way with the feck of



Elie Parish Church.

Elie folk. Still, for a good part of the year—and the observant reader will have noted that by this time we have travelled far into the warm heart of summer as well as into the East of Fife—they can hardly call their town their own ; their streets and playgrounds are in the hands of the stranger, and they remain for the most part indoors serving customers.

A rambler by the fringes of Fife forty years ago had a different story to tell. Elie then wore a melancholy air ; it was “a disappointed place.” It was necessary to assure the visitor, who might be deceived by first impressions and the ill word given to it by the *Gazetteers*, that it was no more deadly dull than its neighbours. A generation later came another guest to Elie ; and he was delighted with the quiet charm of this nook of the Kingdom—with its invigorating breezes, its generous endowment of turf and sand and rock, its glorious outlook upon the Firth and the Lothian shores, the air of ease and peace and frank enjoyment pervading a place where you could “wear in the afternoon and evening the same loose coat you had put on in the morning, and where your wife had not to dress for parade.” He put pen to paper and let his heart overflow in praise of the most unpretentious and delightful of watering-places. And then the world—at least the little world within easy reach of Elie—rushed

in to see and to share in the discovery. Possibly, were he to come and look upon his handiwork, he might feel a little sorry that he had let himself be tempted to blab of his "Find in Fife."

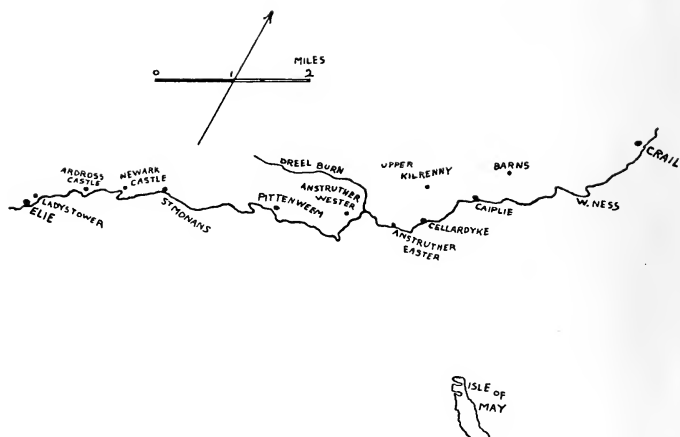
This is no my ain Elie,
Fair though the Elie be.

The difference is that between a beauty still unconscious of her power and one that begins to know her own charms, and is willing to set them off to the best advantage.

Later we sit down by the rocks fringing the Ruby Bay to smoke the calumet of peace. The colours of day slowly fade from the sky, and out of the sea a mystic gray haze steals in and wraps the land in its folds. The lights of Elie become faint blurs of red and the flashing eye of the May is quenched. It is a medium in which sounds and forms seem to be magnified. Yet nothing is to be seen but the vague shapes of the rocks, and nothing heard except the sob of the troubled breast of the sea as it tells its secret to the shore. An infinite calm falls upon the spirit. Elie satisfies us through and through. We have time to analyse the twinge of discontent which came upon us when we paced its clean and handsome streets a few hours ago. Partly it was that feeling of disappointment which seizes us when we meet with something else than we had

counted on, though it may happen to be something better. As the author of the *Roundabout Papers* has noted, one murmurs even at roast turkey with truffles and champagne if he has set his heart upon an honest beefsteak and a homely pint of stout. Partly, no doubt, the passing pique at Elie was a reflection of the misery which one unfortunate member of the company suffered in having to tramp, through a town where people have become rather point-device in their apparel, in raiment plastered with the mud of the Cocklemill burn.

ELIE TO CRAIL



ELIE TO CRAIL

Eastward they scoured, out-scampering the gale,
Till they took refuge in the town of Crail.

Tennant's *Anster Fair*.

THE sun is gilding Elie Kirk steeple when we look abroad the next morning. The air that is stirring the trees is Elie air—bland yet stimulating. The mist has drawn off and has pitched a camp on Kellie Law, whence by and by it will make a descent and lay waste the smiling landscape around Balcaskie and Balcarres, turning green fields and woods and blue sky and waters into one monotone of gray. In such weather, bracing and joyous, and yet subject to sharp and harsh changes of mood, should one set forth to explore Farthest Fife—that East Neuk which is the abstract and brief epitome of the Kingdom, as Fife itself is the concentrated essence of Scottish history and character.

St. Monan's and its kirk spire beckon us forward, while near at hand is the "Lady's Tower," where a lady of Ardrross of last century ventured greatly daring to bathe, after sending

the bellman round Elie to warn the vulgar not to disturb her at her ablutions. Close to the sea margin and not far from the road, which after clearing the woods of Elie House pursues the even tenour of its way between the open fields, are a fragment or two of the walls of Ardrross Castle, and beside it, and much more conspicuous, is its doocot. All over Fife the Columbarium attends the Castle as closely as did Ralpho Hudibras. With "the wee pickle land, the big pickle debt, and the lawsuit," it made one of the prime elements of a Fife lairdship. The Dishingtons of Ardrross, however, were not of the small fry of Fife landowners. The builder of the castle married a sister of the Bruce; and he gave entertainment here to King David II. and his Queen when they landed from the wreck on the Lady's Rock, and helped them to set about fulfilling their vow to erect a church to their preserver, Monan the Martyr.

A quarter of a mile farther along the shore, also on the cliff edge, is the gaunt shell of Newark Castle. Here lived, when done with Kirk and State affairs and war's alarms, David Lesley—the victor of Philiphaugh, the vanquished of Dunbar—one of the most distinguished of the long list of soldiers of fortune whom Fife sent out from its narrow bounds to carve their names on Continental and national history.

High up is the window of the room where a daughter of the house secretly sheltered and fed a young Lindsay of Balcarres, a hunted rebel of the '15, and, like Grizel Hume of Polwarth, drew upon herself thereby reproaches for her gluttony. The vaults have in their time been well stored with smuggled goods, and brushes with that common enemy of Whig and Jacobite—the gauger—have been witnessed on the shore below.

Beetling over the cliff of greenstone and trap is the inevitable doocot, festooned with salmon nets. You cannot go far along these shores of Fife without seeing the line of stakes running out to sea, the salmon coble in the cove, and the bleached nets drying in the sun.

The footpath between the grain crops and the braeface lands us under the lee of St. Monan's Church. There it squats on the west bank of the "Inweary Burn," lifting its stumpy gray spire of hewn stone high enough to survey the country round, and turning one of its weather-beaten gables to the sea that in times of storm drenches the great solid retaining wall of its kirkyard. The preservation of his ancient Church, now more than five centuries old, is not the least of the miracles wrought by Monan of the May. He was slain by the Northmen, on the island which St. Adrian and he and other holy men have made sacred ground, and buried at his

chapel "nere to the se." An anchorite kept his memory alive in a cell of the rock on the other side of the burn from the site of St. Monan's Kirk ; and wonderful cures followed the touch of his relics. David Bruce owed more to him than preservation from the angry Firth ; for the virtue of Monan's bones had already healed the grievous arrow wound he had got at Neville's Cross.

St. Monan's has suffered ill-treatment and neglect. Its north and south transepts stood long roofless ; and Lord Kellie was able to pronounce it "as decayed and dirty as a Kirk ought to be." But thanks to the strength of its walls, it was never "dung down," or even abandoned as a place of worship ; and when the ancient Kirk of Abercrombie had to be deserted, it was a happy thought, although prompted by thrift, to flit the parish church to this chapel by the sea. Again, in the early part of the century, it was on the point of being condemned and demolished ; but its guardian saint, or the rising sense of taste in church architecture, interposed, and it was restored instead to its present form.

In its original shape, this little gem of the middle-pointed Gothic art of its era is said to have been cruciform, with the square tower surmounted by the octagonal spire at the intersection of the limbs. But architects tell us they can find no traces of a nave extending to the

west of the steeple. Such as it is, Fife and St. Monan's have reason to be proud and careful of it.

We scramble by the boulders across the bed of the burn to the fishing village, and run the gauntlet of its smells towards the harbour. Concerning the cave of Monan, it contents us to



St. Monan's.

take the word of a former minister of the parish, that it is "a snug recess sheltered by the tiles and gray eaves of a byre, among the banks, walls, and ruinous tenements of the village, overhung by a dusky coloured mass of high whinstone rock." It is dead low tide at the pier—on water and on land. The two or three boats left in the harbour are aground, and on shore is only the irreducible minimum of superannuated loafers and tow-headed and bare-legged bairns.

Life in a fisher-town has its regular ebb and flow like the sea ; and the business of "St. Minnin's" has been on the great waters from time immemorial. Sir Robert Sibbald was able to count, two centuries ago, twelve boats, with seven men each, plying from the port in the herring season. How gladly would one dispense with his dissertation on the identity of the Picts of Fife with the Goths, for the sake of the sketchiest of pictures of the fisher-folk and fisher-life, the boats and tackle and street and quay scenes of the place that lay within an hour's walk of his uncle's house at Gibliston ! Then, as now, the movement of the silvery shoals coming in from the great deep must have sent a thrill and quiver to the adjoining land. In St. Monan's the very Kirk bell was tongue-tied when the "Draive" was off the coast, lest its chime should scare away the fish. They no longer come so near in their myriads. But as faithfully as the tides answer the moon do stir and bustle in and about the harbour respond to the approach of the harvest of the sea. It is a poetess from the southern border of Fife who sings :—

O joyfu's the din when the boats come in,
When the boats come in sae early ;
When the lift is blue, and the herring nets fu',
And the sun glints in a' things rarely ;

When the wives buskit braw, and the bairns an' a',
Come linkin' down to the quay, O,
And the very fisher dugs pu' each other by the lugs,
And join in the general glee, O.

Then as the fish move farther away, boats and men move after them. The crews are scattered from Cape Clear to the Shetlands, and the villages by the Forth lapse back into torpor. There are times, too, when the mood of the sea rules yet more powerfully the pulse of St. Monan's—when hearts beat as wildly as the waves outside with fear and hope and grief, and then sink again into the stony calm of despair.

Strangers with pencil or brush in hand are not ferlies in St. Minnin's, and the inhabitants have acquired ideas of their own about art and artists. This we gather from the company of youngsters of both sexes who draw near and audibly and frankly comment upon our appearance and work, as we sit resting and sketching at the corner of the harbour. The local authority already cited was not mistaken when he deplored the prospect of the dulling, through contact with outside influences, of "the fine edge of delicacy," still discernible in the fisher-folk of fifty years ago. Fortunately a group of the elders of the village, seated within short hail, do not think us worthy of attention, and there is wafted to us, between whiffs of tobacco smoke, snatches of native con-

versation. They are posting up somebody who through absence has temporarily lost touch of the village news.

"Did the trip gae to May this year?"

"Humph! Aye; an' got drooned. It was fair weeshin' oot."

"What's come o' Sandie Reekie?"

"Humph! he's soomin' a steamer on the Tay."

As we pursue the path by the shore towards Pittenweem we come upon a pretty sea idyll. A four-year-old urchin, naked as when he was born, is seated in a Brobdingnagian toy boat, which he fills from stem to stern, and his older companions tow him backwards and forwards between an outlying ledge and the rocky beach. The radiant young rogue, plump-limbed as a cupid and fearless as a Mer-Baby, grins at us in passing from his rocking craft, which has barely an inch or two of free board, and the picture is still in our thoughts when our nostrils are saluted by the scent of the stacks of dried white fish with which Pittenweem has barricaded this western approach to its sea-town.

Verily a gnarled and wind-rooted product of its soil and air is this ancient royal burgh, as viewed from the Shore. The tall and grim old houses fronting the harbour scowl upon the sea as though they had faced nothing but foul weather

from that quarter since they were built. Two, that mount guard at the east end of the empty quay, are more quaint-looking than their fellows, and totter a little as if age and rheumatism had got into their joints. The rest, drawn up stiffly in line, look like the first rank of one of those regiments of dour Whigamore mariners, salters, and maltsters who went forth from the East Neuk to withstand Montrose and his caterans.

Pittenweem has been a centre of religious life and a place of trade, but never the abode of peace. The seed of it, as of St. Monan's and other Fife towns, may be sought in the cave on the slope of the hill between the priory ruins and the shore. Doubtless it sheltered some holy man of the Age of Saints—perhaps Fillan, of the illuminated arm-bone; and Pittenweem is "the settlement of the Cave." The grotto has two chambers and a well; and there are subterranean stairs and passages, now blocked, that led to the monastic buildings above. A convent of Austin canons-regular, dedicated to the Virgin, was planted here in the twelfth century. It was joined to St. Adrian's fane on the May, and when the ardour of mediæval monasticism for seclusion cooled down the monks of the island flitted to Pittenweem to be nearer their lands and the world. So the burgh grew around the Priory, and Town

Hall and Parish Church have arisen within the precincts of the religious house.

Monks and burgesses alike, they had a fine hearty stomach for a quarrel in Pittenweem. The Prior and Convent have been seen "in arrayit batill," shooting "divers pieces of artillerie" at the King's officers, who would have cut their corn while a lawsuit was pending. The townsfolk set the fashion of fitting out privateers to punish the "English loons" of pirates. They carried on a long internecine war, over tolls and dues on fish and malt and coal, with their neighbour burghs to the East—the Ansters, Kilrenny, and Crail.

Perhaps it was their too great familiarity with monkish ways that led the Pittenweem people to throw themselves with so much zeal into the cause of the Reformation and later into "the business of the Kirk." Years after Fife's great Battle of Armageddon, vessels of the burgh were "lying wrakit in the full sea, the master and hail mariners being killit at Kilsyth." Great, too, was the steer, stramash, and strife in this quarrelsome nook of the Kingdom when Charles II.—a crowned and covenanted Prince—entered Pittenweem, and the town, remembering its debt to his grandfather, the kindly pedant who had interested himself in its plague of witches and gifted to it "the great house or lodging of the

Monastery," hoisted its colours on the bartizan of the tower of the Parish Church, met him with eight-and-forty of its ablest men in their best apparel, with partisans and musquets, spread at "Robert Smith's yett" a table furnished with, among other cates, "sundrie great bunnis of fine flour," and broached barrels of its strong home-brewed ale to speed him on his way to Worcester Fight.

In a house in St. Mary Street the Kirkcaldy gauger was soundly sleeping, with the proceeds of a sale of smuggled goods captured at Anstruther in his saddle-bags, when Andrew Wilson, the Pathhead baker, and his accomplices broke in upon his rest, and set afoot the fatal business of the "Porteous Riots." And, to interpose a somewhat milder memory in Pittenweem's stormy record, Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury, the friend of Johnson and Goldsmith, "the scourge of imposters, the terror of quacks," was born in the Water Wynd.

The relics of the Priory are scattered dis-



Pittenweem Parish Church.

persedly, in the shape of fragments of ivied wall and carven stones built into later dwellings. The residence of the incumbent of the Episcopal Chapel is reared on the site and partly with the materials of the Monastery. It was the dower-house of the Earls of Kellie, until it came into the possession of that last and admirable example of the nonjuring Bishop and table wag of last century, Dr. Low. With him may be said to have expired the purest type of East of Fife Jacobitism, although in its more combative form it must have been dying when, in the '45, Lord Kellie was only able to enlist for the regiment that was to have done battle for the rightful Prince one lieutenant-general and one serving-man.

The fighting spirit of Pittenweem may be quenched and its romance faded, but it is a pleasant spot enow, approached from the land side. From it to Anstruther is but a spang, either by the road or by the shore. We make our spang, as usual, by the coast—past the Prior's Saddle, and the bathers splashing where the monks stepped ashore ; past Billow Ness, where Pittenweem and Anstruther meet to play golf—on a hazardous little links, made up of turfy tables and rocky gullies—on the spot, dedicated of old to the burning of witches, to which young Chalmers was wont to come and “preach to the waves.”

And we land, as did Rob the Ranter and so many other pilgrims bound to the "Lint Fair" in the Loan, in the green behind the shore houses of Wester Anster, and, by and by, at the trees and bridge shadowing the drumly waters of the Dreel burn.

Were it not for the Dreel one could not tell where Wester Anstruther ends and Easter Anstruther begins ; and between the latter and Cellardyke, the shore part of the burgh of Kilrenny, there is only the narrower ribbon of the "Culdies Burn." These little East of Fife towns, from Earlsferry to Crail, are strung together like "herrings on a hake" ; or should we say, looking to their past and their present, like a row of extinct volcanoes ?

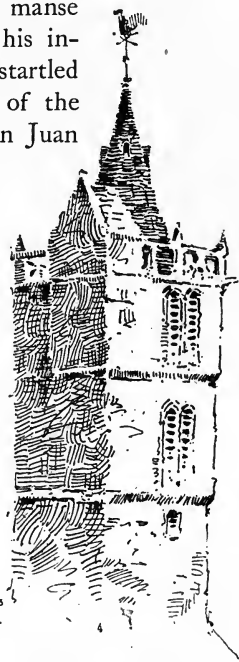
The Ansters and Kilrenny are volcanoes run together, like craters in the moon. They monopolise the shore for a mile and a half, and make no secret that their business is in fish. Their debt to the sea is proclaimed on the arms of these venerable burghs, who were driving a lucrative trade with the Low Countries, curing herrings and salting cod when Liverpool was a place of small account, and the town-herd of Glasgow drove the cattle of the burgesses afield to the site of their new City Hall. Pittenweem bears a figure of Adrian in his boat ; Kilrenny a fisher-craft rowing under sun and cloud ; Crail

a masted galley with stars; Easter Anster an anchor.

The Wester burgh rejoices in the device of three salmon. As we enter by the West Port we note, as a freak of local taste, that spoils of the sea are plastered on the very house-fronts, in the shape of *buckies* and cockles arranged in geometric patterns. We note also that wealth and variety of occupation must have increased since 1617, when the magistrates sought to excuse themselves from regaling the Sovereign with beef, on the plea that it was "ane very mean town, yea, of all the burghs of this realm the meanest," wherein "not ane flesher" was to be found, "we being all seafaring men and fishers." The dumpy Parish Church still stands in its churchyard by the Dreel, but the "Craw's Nest" of Fisher Willie and later lairds of Anstruther, in which Charles II. supped to his liking, has long disappeared from the other bank. The Church itself, probably pre-Reformation in date, has suffered restoration that has cleared out the old trade lofts, and all that was quaint and characteristic of the former life of the burgh—worse havoc this than when the "Inglis" landed at Anster, plundered the Kirk of its sand-glass, and flung "ye auld bybell in ye sea."

Easter Anster Kirk is almost within hail. Younger than its neighbour—younger by a full

generation even than the manse which worthy Maister James Melvill, nephew of Andrew, the Boanerges of St. Rule's, perfected with his own hands in 1590—it has suffered less from the improver, and its curious lopsided tower, crowned by a weather-beaten bartizan and abbreviated spire, is pleasant to look upon. Two years before he completed his manse Maister James chronicles, in his inimitable way, an incident that startled Anstruther. For a remnant of the ruined Armada—no other than Juan Gomez de Medina, general of twenty hulks, and his shipwrecked crew—were drifted hither from Fair Isle, and landed “nocht to giff mercy bot to ask.” The minister was brought from his bed to talk with them, and held courteous discourse with a Spaniard of “grave and stout countenance,” who “bekkit even to the yeard”; and behind were, “to the number of thirteen score, for the maist part young beardless men, silly, trauchled, and hungered,” whom Anstruther



Easter Anster Kirk.

feasted on "kail, porridge, and fish"—an unwonted but welcome diet for the castaway dons ; even when seasoned by godly Maister James's discourse on "the words of the Prophet Elisa to the King of Israel in Samaria—Give them bread and water."

Most of the streets of Anster find their way down to the Fore Shore. It is spacious, like the harbour which it borders, and the fine row of tall houses behind the Town Cross has a certain Batavian grace, reflected, one fancies, from some Flemish quay or market-place where Anster did business before the Union spoiled its shipping trade.

On the road down to it you pass close to the house where Thomas Chalmers was born, one of the fourteen children of a substantial dyer and shipowner of the place. John Goodsir, the anatomist, and William Tennant, who has sung with such birr and gusto and nimble fancy the humours of "Anster Fair," were likewise natives ; not to mention the more—nay most—doubtful case, cited by a friend, of Chaucer's poor scholars of "Soler halle of Cantebregge," Johan and Alayn,

Of a town were they born that hyght Struthir,
Fer in the North, I can nat telle where.

Of Tennant we got a glimpse through the

eyes of one who had seen him—"a mere apology for a man, but a gentleman every inch." Anster folk still point out the spot in the East Green where stood Maggie Lauder's change-house ; but do not seem to remember so well the site of William Cockburn's low-ceilinged stationer's shop on the Shore, where, when the Great French War was raging and the newfangled stage-coach was a marvel of swiftness, the news of the day was dispensed to the half-pay naval captains and Tory lairds who made it their howff, while young Archibald Constable served them from behind the counter with sealing wax, blotting sand, and goose quills.

Through the long mean street of Cellardyke goes our road, skirting Skinfast-haven. Where that dingy fisher-town tapers to nothing, and inside the gleaming teeth of the Wolves and Cutty Skelly rocks, are the "Cardinal's Steps." David Beaton was wont to disembark at them on his way to St. Andrews or to visit his lands around Cellardyke. Kilrenny, the Upper, whose spire peeps at us over the slope, has, or thinks it has, in its churchyard the grave of the "proud Cardinal" whom Norman Leslie and his company first murdered and then pickled in salt. It is a tiny hamlet that became a royal burgh by a blunder, and then annexed Cellardyke to ballast itself with population.

Paul Jones once anchored off Cellardyke, and, disappointed in his hope of finding a pilot among the fishermen, fired a round shot ashore, which long after was picked out of the sod of what is now the school playground.

There are still three miles of a delightful walk, by a shore haunted by seabirds and strewn with boulders, to the "ancient well-aired toun o' Crail." Half way are the Coves and Hermit Well of Caiplie.

A projecting rock, with the profile of a lion's face, is hollowed into dark cells, on the walls of which incised crosses and other symbols are traced. This is "Caplauchy," where Peden, the Covenanter, hid his head—where Adrian and his companions, coming from the Land of Hungarie, "arrivit intil Fife," before passing to the May Island, that lies abreast of the Cave and kindling there a flame that shone over Pictish Scotland.

Should we not couple with this light-bringing mission the work of the Laird of Barns,—the father of the bride of Drummond of Hawthornden, that died while her wedding feast was being got ready,—who first raised on the May a beacon to guide the mariner entering the Firth? The island priory, to which sick pilgrims and barren women once flocked, is but a fragment of old wall; Cunningham's "coal lowe" is replaced by an electric light, that flashes its message

across sixty miles of sea. But the memory of good deeds remains.

As we peer into the Caiplic Cave a young damosel of Crail, and the visitor she has brought in tow, peer beside us.

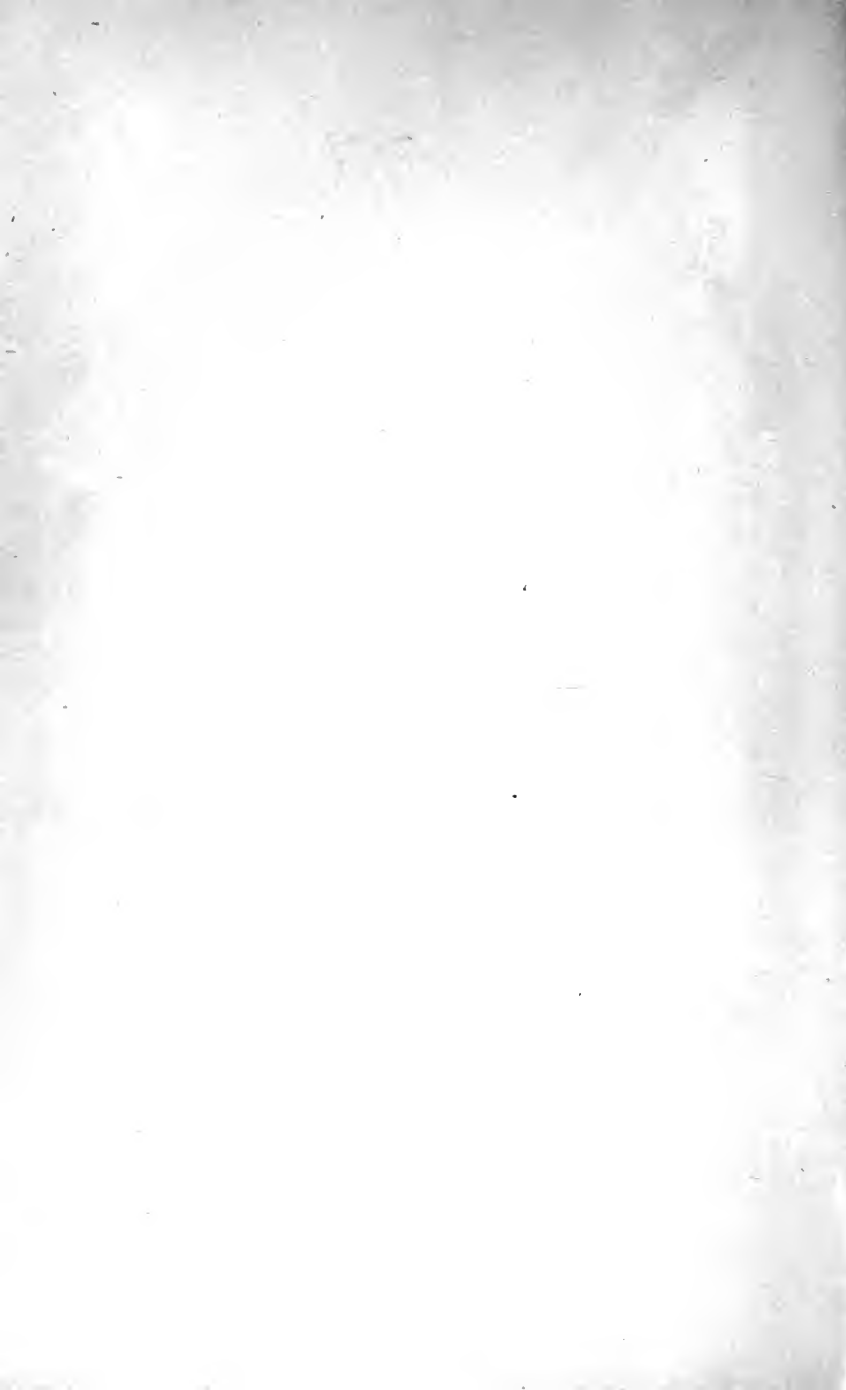
"A poor specimen," he says disparagingly of the local lion.

"A poor one, but our own. Big enough for Crail," is the tart retort.

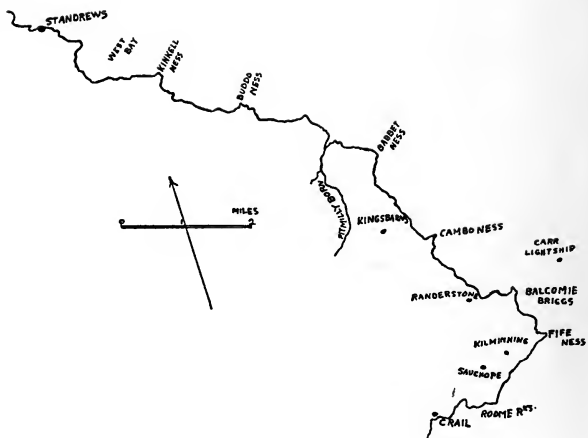
Nymphs of remotest Fife,—

Seu vos Pittenweema tenent, seu Creliæ crofta,
Sive Anstræa domus,—

your voices, heard in the dusk, sound sweetly, yet with capabilities of sharpness, as when Drummond walked with his Mary by the Coves of Caiplic and the Castlehaven Braes and dressed up into his Latin macaronics the flytings of two neighbouring lairds' wives !



CRAIL TO ST. ANDREWS



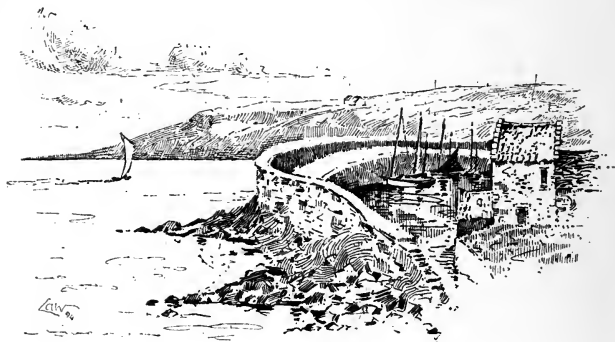
CRAIL TO ST. ANDREWS

Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further.

Book of Job.

THE windows of the East Neuk Hotel look out upon the Westgait of Crail. Opposite, the Crosscauseway leaves the clean wide thoroughfare, and winds down, among gable ends and forestairs, towards the harbour, and sends off a branch that climbs round the Castle walls to the terrace overlooking the sea. Above the roofs and chimneys there is a glint of blue waters. If you step down into the roadway, the chances are that you will have it all to yourself. Farther eastward there is a twist in the street, where it dodges round a quaintly corbelled corner and the vista is nearly closed by the Town House steeple ; and then it becomes broader still as, under the name of the High Street and the Marketgait, it passes the Market Cross and the Kirk. Parallel, and nearer the sea, is another spacious thoroughfare—the Nethergait—with a passage or two diving down from it to the shore.

Half an hour's walk from where Crail opens liberal portals to let the east wind enter and wrestle with the trees it has planted in its chief streets brings you to Fifeness—the Ultima Thule of the Kingdom—beyond which there is no land until you come to Denmark. There is no hurry yet to take that road. Let us stroll leisurely round this “Fortress in the Nook.”



Crail Harbour.

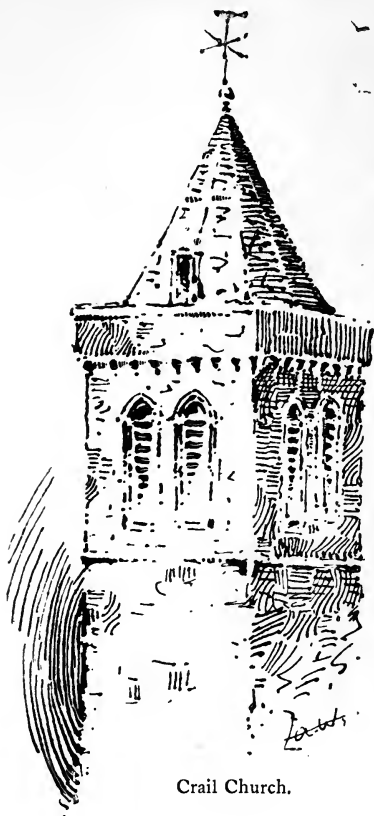
And first down towards the harbour. It is set in a wrinkle of the rocky coast, and the steep braes and the clusters of houses that scramble up their face impend over the narrow quay. Roome Bay, a furlong or two eastward, would have afforded more spacious harbourage. But this is “big enough for Crail.” The schooner and the fishing-craft or two in the tiny haven are

“oxtered” close into the land. The seawall is thrust out and wound round them like a strong arm shielding them from the blasts of the North Sea. Two ghostly sentinels mount guard at different levels on the cliff behind; they are white-washed obelisks, bearing the guiding lights of the harbour. From the angle of the high walls enclosing the site of the Royal Castle projects a look-out turret that almost overhangs the pier. Behind it is a patch of greenery, shorn close down to the level of the protecting walls by the keen scythe of the east wind; and immediately below is the terrace where Crail can take the air and watch what is passing in the haven beneath.

It has been a seaport and fishing-place for a thousand years. The time when it first learned the art of curing herrings and traded in them to the Netherlands is lost in the mists of antiquity. King Constantine may have been gnawing a “Crail capon” when he spied from this watch-tower of the Kingdom the coming of the terrible Northmen; and doubtless it was a toothsome dish at the board of David the Saint, William the Lion, Malcolm the Maiden, and Robert the Bruce, all of whom are said to have visited and favoured Crail.

Long after it ceased to be a kingly hunting-seat and residence the shadow of royalty clung

to Crail. Its Hereditary Constables had authority



Crail Church.

from the Water of Leven to the "Brook Putticken." It supplied the royal table with "rabbits,

herring, and porpoises." There is nothing left of the fabric of the Castle or of the Chapel of St. Rufus, once enclosed within its precincts ; and only a fragment down beside the shore of the Nunnery of Crail, which had Haddington as its mother-house.

But so long as Crail has its Collegiate Church with its churchyard it will be unable to forget that it has a past behind it. The tumbledown school-house has lately been removed that screened the Kirk from the Marketgait, and you now look freely into an enclosure which is more richly endowed with memorials of former generations, in crumbling mural tombs and mossgrown head and through stones, than perhaps any other country God's Acre in Scotland. At the corner of the highway is the "Blue Stone of Crail." It is the local fetish ; and Crail bairns used to kiss it in leaving the old town, in pledge of their return. Satan—who, first and last, has had much to do with the raising of Fife kirks—flung it at the steeple from the Isle of May, where he sat girning and gnashing his teeth after being caught in the act of laying hands to the sacred building ; in witness whereof his thumb-mark is to be seen to this day on the big boulder.

When this incident happened cannot be told exactly. But in 1517 William Myrton, Vicar of Lathrisk, aided by the Abbess of Haddington,

endowed the Church as a collegiate charge, with a provost and nine prebends, who served in the different chapels under its broad roof dedicated to the Virgin and saints. Over one of its altars was the wonder-working "Auld Rude of Karrail"; the town became far known for miracles and pilgrimages, as well as for "speldrins and partans."

Changes and flittings came in the train of John Knox, who began here in June 1559 his crusade against the monuments of Papacy. A few months later we find the "juggis counsaill and haill communitie amyaberly desyring the haill chaplains of the town to apply thame selfis to Goddis word, and lyf godily, conform to the Congregation." There were Crail folk who did not take "amyaberly" to the new dispensation. John Melvill—brother of Andrew of St. Andrews and uncle of James of Anster—was preaching in the Kirk a savoury discourse touching "that filthy swine the Bishop of Rome," when a Bailie's wife "rase in the essemble and with hech voce said aganis hym thyr wordis—'It is a schame to yow that ar gentillmen that ye pull hym nocht owt of the pulpot be the luggis.'"

Let us be thankful that the fabric survived these and later ecclesiastical storms—that the venerable steeple lifts its severe lines, a landmark over leagues of sea; that the bell in the tower, cast by Peeter Vanden Ghein in 1614, still calls

the worshippers to prayer ; that the Sculptured Stone, oldest of Crail's relics, no longer prone on the pavement, presents to them as they enter a face traced with strange symbols of bird and beast and creeping thing, and that within there are still a fragment or two of carved oak panelling and other mementoes of the generations who have come and gone.

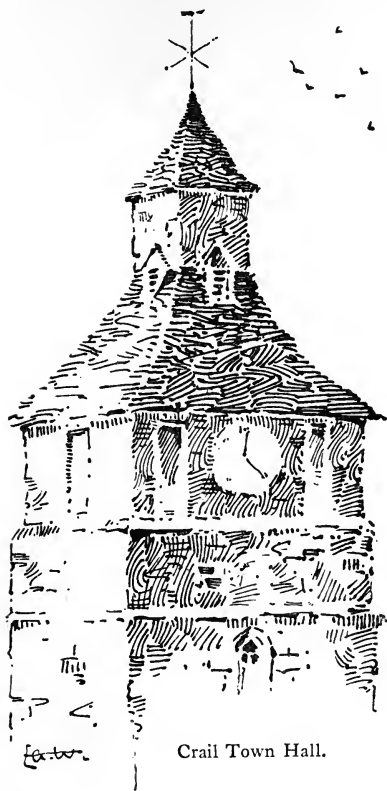
But it is on the churchyard walls that Crail's history is writ large and full. He who prowls round them, especially if he has been looking into Mr. Erskine Beveridge's admirable work, can read in the quaint lettering of this Book of the Dead the story of the rise and fall in the fortunes of the burgh and of its leading families. The oldest and finest of its group of mural tombs is a monument also of the Dutch intercourse with Crail in the end of the sixteenth century. It is to a hot-blooded Lumsden of Airdrie, who got into trouble by meddling with the Crown jewels and with the plots of Francis, Earl of Bothwell, and it was raised in the year when the East Neuk lairds were setting afoot their perilous enterprise of colonising the Lews, that brought them more bastonings than profit. The reigns of the Sixth James and the First Charles must have been a prosperous time for the burgesses of Crail—for merchants in fish and malt, like the Bailie "of doughty Douglas Kyn," whose tomb declares that

he "lived in all men's love," although extant records attest that on occasion he took the law into his own hands. Fair monuments of the period have sprouted thickly along the west and south walls ; —among them the broken effigy of a knight, in plate armour, long identified by Crail as its benefactor The Bruce, but found by sober research to be only a Bruce of Symbister, who went to the Orkneys and pushed his fortunes under the savage Earls Robert and Patrick, and came back to die in this pleasant nook.

With the Civil War and the troubles of the Covenant discord and poverty fall on the burgh, the monuments wax few and mean. But here is a memorial to "Lang Sandy Leslie," with whom Archbishop Sharp smoked his last pipe at Ceres, before crossing Magus Moor, and who came, like Sharp before him, to be minister of Crail, until, at the Revolution, he was turned out for refusing to pray for their Majesties William and Mary. Rank Jacobitism lingered long beside bitter Whiggery in these parts ; and Lord Rosebery's "judicious Crawford, who got a pension from George and a knighthood from James," was a portioner and bailie in Crail. To a later, and from the point of view of sepulchral art, a debased era, belong Jamie Kingo's rhyming lingos and the praises of the Classic M'Min.

At the door of the Town Hall we pause, look-

ing up at a fragment of an older Tolbooth bear-



ing the burgh arms—a ship of exaggerated Dutch build, terribly over-manned and over-burdened

by her crew of full-faced mariners—while the Provost (douce man !) fumbles at the door and mystifies us with the promise of a sight of the “bulls wi’ dauds o’ wax hingin’ at the tails o’ them,” kept there under lock and key. They are Papal Bulls of Julian II. and Leo X., in the beautiful bold caligraphy of their age and country ; and here also we have a peep at the ancient bell “lifted” from the Kirk and hung in the queer pagoda-like tower ; at the battered old iron-clasped chest that formerly held the burgh archives ; and at other curious municipal antiquities.

The Chief Magistrate himself may well rank as one of these, for he tells us that he is the senior by six months of Mr. Gladstone, and is still in the thick of politics. Many kindnesses and much local lore are showered on us by Crail’s Grand Old Man and by other citizens, and we depart after having kissed, in spirit, the Blue Stone and vowed to return to this trimmest and most venerable and also last of the little burghs sewed round the southern hem of Fife.

For, out and alas ! our peregrination of Fife draws to a close. At St. Andrews must we call a halt. Nor must we enter that city of historical shadows as chroniclers, since St. Andrews itself would fill a book. Our tracing of the Fringes began on the banks of a drumly tidal river, rolling slowly between its carselands ; it ends where the

waves of the North Sea beat restlessly on an iron coast. It began when frost bound the earth, and set a keen edge to the wind ; it ends with a July sun blazing down out of a blue sky.

A last and choice morsel is left. Fifeness has still to be weathered ; the shoreward edges of the links of Balcomie, the woods of Cambo, and the braes of Kinkell to be traced. The path to the East Neuk winds round the curve of Roome sands and traverses Crail's golf course, "usit for pastime and sundrie kinds of exercise" by the burghers of three centuries ago. The gravestones of an ancient cell of St. Monan bridge the burn and prop the grain stacks of Kilminning. Mount the bank, and across the fields you will see the dark tower of Balcomie, weirdest of aspect and most remote of situation of all the Castles of the Thanedom, built by a Learmonth of the "Rhymer's kin." From it rode once another Laird of Balcomie—a Sir William Hope, author of *The Complete Fencing Master*—to meet and slay, by the Sculptured Stone of Sauchope hard by, a stranger-guest who had come from foreign parts to test his unrivalled skill as a horseman and swordsman. Farther off are the woods of Wormiston. The family of Spens, who wonned there for centuries, claimed descent from the Thanes of Fife, and were Hereditary Constables

of Crail. Sir Patrick, of the grand old ballad, may have been a branch of this wind-rooted tree. It fell, or was transplanted to Scandinavia, and then the Lindsays—"more Royalist than the King"—came to Wormiston, and romance and misfortune did not depart.

Here, indeed, is the last hold of Old Romance—the very sanctuary of the East Wind. The great rocks, as we move forward to the Cape Turnagain of Fife, look as if they had been cracked and split by the hammer of Thor, before the sea began to wear them smooth. Every jutting point has its cap of white, and from every hollow comes a murmur of waves. The breeze prowls, keen and unsatisfied, even at this warm summer noontide, over the braes and round the boulders, and—

Out and in, out and in,
Bends the bush and whirls the whin.

The stones of the "Dane's Dyke" are gray with lichen and patched with moss. The hands of the sea-rovers who built it a thousand years ago are mouldering under the close wiry grass and patches of bent, heather, and sea pinks. Thinner grows the covering, and more and more the naked ribs of the rock protrude, until, like a great ploughshare, the Ness plunges down into the sea and marks with a white furrow the track

towards the Carr Lightship and "Norrowa' over the Faem."

A group of sun-browned lassies in clean pinafores are round the draw-well ; little reck they or we as we drink from their hands that its waters have mingled with the blood of Dane and Scot. The picnickers have been before us at the Black Cave—the Nigra Specus of the old Chroniclers—and the soot of their fires is over the crosses graven above the stone pillow on which Constantine lay dying, having fought and lost his last battle with the heathen by the Northern Sea. On the Blue Rock—a fragment of the pebble the Foul Fiend flung at Crail Kirk—we stripped to bathe in the sandy bay, where Mary of Guise landed with her French courtiers, to become the wife of James V. and the mother of Mary Stuart.

Then, with faces turned towards St. Andrews, we pursue the rough and scrambling shore path, past the handful of stones that was Randerston Castle, the home of the Myrtons ; by the parks and rabbit warrens of Cambo, where a pleasant diversion is made inland, to bait at the cosy village of Kingsbarns on cheese and bread ; and across the Pitmilly Burn—the "Brook Puttiken" of the Crail charters.

Blaw the weather as it likes,
There's beild about Pitmilly dykes.

But we ask only beild from the blazing sun as we pause to wipe perspiring foreheads at Buddo Ness, and look across St. Andrews' Bay, where a fishing smack is tacking close inshore, to the vision of the tall towers and crooked pinnacles of the city of St. Regulus, written against the horizon—

Like a Turk verse upon a scimitar.



St. Andrews from Buddo Ness.

It is the goal of our Fife pilgrimage ; and at the sight of it memories come crowding of the saints and martyrs, the kings and prelates, the plotters and zealots, the men great in war, in letters, and golf who have played their parts on that narrow platform by the sea. But before we present ourselves at the old Cathedral gateway

“Craigduff” and the “Rock and Spindle” have been climbed, and a wide berth has been given to the “Maiden.” “Be bold, but not too bold,” we seem to read on the time-worn portal of the Pends ; and we enter.

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